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MARY GRAHAM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By LAURA JANE CURLING.

VOL. I.

"Aide-toi, et le ciel t'aidera."

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MARY GRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

One moment and our hearts are gay,
The next we droop in sorrow;
And hope in vain attempts to soar,
While fading joys remind us,
That all the scenes that lie before
Are dark as those behind us.

It was towards the close of a dreary autumn day in October, in the year 1850. A steady, drizzling rain, accompanied by frequent and violent gusts of wind, a grey, leaden-coloured sky above, which held forth no promise of either abating, did not serve to render those whom business or duty had obliged to leave

their comfortable firesides less impatient to regain a place of shelter.

In spite of wind and rain, however, several ragged urchins were assembled round a small roadside inn at the entrance of the town of Hatfield, boasting to each other of the day's exploits. Bill informing Jack "how as he had gammoned a leddy out o' saxpence," by shewing and commenting pitifully on the miserable condition of bare feet in such inclement weather; the said Bill's "pal" Jack, thereupon highly extolling his friend's cleverness, handed him over a pair of good stout boots which had been left in his charge during the day, and which he told his friend with a grin "were not much the worse for wear, since last he saw them." Bill was just in the act of thrusting his bare feet into the coverings to which they had been so long strangers, when his, and his companion's, attention was arrested by a stranger riding furiously up to the door of the inn, who hastily throwing his horse's reins to the hopeful Jack, dismounted,

and going to the bar, demanded of the landlord the nearest road to the house of Mr. Morrice.

The fat host of the "Rising Star," paused a moment to collect his scattered senses, considerably confused by the abrupt and agitated manner of his strange visitor, then directed him to cross "once to the left and right, and then on to the left and right again, when he would finally arrive at the abode of Mr. Morrice," after receiving which plain and straightforward direction, the stranger remounted his horse, threw a penny to the gaping Jack at the door, and proceeded at a furious pace through the village.

"I knows him, Jack," said Bill, in a confidential tone to his friend, as they watched the figure of the fast retreating horseman, "he lives with some of the great folks at St. Halbans. I's seen him out riding with his master, such a fine, handsome gemman; Graham, I think his name is. My, if he hain't got his master's cloak on, that he wears hisself when

it's rainy; weatherbeaters, I think they calls 'um. And how he do ride! I wonder who's ill, that he's all o' such a flurry to see our doctor."

Leaving our worthy friend Bill to wonder and speculate as to the cause of the stranger's haste with his friend and boot preserver Jack, we will take the turning to the "left and right," till we find ourselves at the door of Mr. Morrice, where a stable boy is holding a horse, which we recognize as the same that, a few minutes ago, stood before the door of the inn of the "Rising Star." The door standing partly open invites an entry, and therefore, without more ado, we will introduce ourselves into the private sanctum of the doctor, and see what is there going on.

In a small room, before a comfortably blazing fire, in a comfortable easy chair, sits a comfortable little man about fifty years of age. His face expresses a due appreciation of the comforts surrounding him, for as he listens to the wind howling round his snugly curtained

casements, and to the pattering of the fast falling rain, his small grey eyes twinkle with satisfaction, for thinks he, "I've done my rounds for to-day, and can now settle down in comfort to my newspaper, toast and tea." But alas! even now as he is giving way to these pleasing anticipations, and the smile is still on his lips, a tap at the door, and Molly announces:

"A man, who says he comes from Mr. Graham's, wishes to speak to master directly."

With a shrug of the shoulders, and a regretful glance at the (as yet) untouched viands spread out so temptingly before him, the disappointed doctor tells Molly to shew the man in, and in another instant our friend, the hasty rider, stands before us. He is an open faced, honest looking young man. His cloak, now partly thrown back, displays to our view a handsome grey suit of livery. There is an expression of great anxiety on his face, as bowing low to Mr. Morrice, he hastily unfolds the occasion of his visit.

"Oh! sir, master has fallen off his horse,

and nearly killed himself. Missis is in a terrible way, keeps fainting on and off; there is only poor Miss Mary who can think or do anything. She sent a boy to fetch Mr. Ernest home from Mr. Martin's, and told me to come on to you. She hoped, sir, you'd arrange to come back with me at once, as every minute is of consequence in such a case as this."

"Certainly, certainly, my good fellow, I will come at once," said the doctor, rising with alacrity. "What a terrible blow it must be to them all, but I trust it may not be so bad as you may think for; but come along, we will be off at once, we have a long way before us. Mr. Graham lately come to reside at Inver House, at St. Albans, is it not?"

"The very same, sir."

The doctor's horse, just taken to the stable, like his master to enjoy rest and comfort after the fatigues of the day, was hastily re-saddled, and the two proceeded to retrace their way through the town.

After about half-an-hour's hard riding,

during which Mark (for so Mr. Graham's man-servant was called), informed the doctor how the accident to his master had occurred, (the particulars of which the reader will be acquainted with in due time), they entered the town of St. Albans, and finally drew rein before a rather old-fashioned, though comfortable looking, mansion, built of red brick. Although of considerable extent, it was but two stories high, the dining, drawing, and sitting-room being all on the same floor, the windows of which opened on to a smooth, neatly-kept lawn.—A broad carriage drive led straight from the gate to the house. The grounds were in extreme order, (though perhaps laid out in rather too stiff and primitive a style), and everything relating to the external appearance of the house, had that peculiar look of comfort and care which generally distinguishes the abode of the wealthy.

It was now quite dark, and lights were seen appearing and disappearing at the different windows, showing some unusual disturbance

within. Scarcely had the doctor's hand touched the bell, ere the door was thrown open, and a young girl about eighteen or nineteen, appeared on the threshold.

It was plain from her dress and appearance she was no servant, indeed the sorrowful, anxious expression of her face showed her to be more than commonly interested in the doctor's visit.

"Thank God, you are come!" she exclaimed, when the door closed; she stood alone in the hall with Mr. Morrice. "Mark has told you all?" she added, in an inquiring tone.

"Yes, my dear young lady, yes, but pray do not distress yourself; it may all come right yet."

She had turned away, and a convulsive sob reached his ear. With a violent effort, however, suppressing her emotion, she proceeded to ascend the broad staircase leading from the hall to the upper rooms, motioning him to follow. At the door of one (rather

separated from the rest), she paused, then gently opening the door, and turning to see that the doctor was still following, she entered. The chamber in which Mr. Morrice now found himself was a large, old-fashioned apartment. Towards the farther end was a bed, the curtains of which were drawn on the side nearest the door, thereby excluding the view of his patient from the inquiring eyes of the doctor. A death-like silence reigned in the apartment, only broken at intervals by the violent gusts of wind, which swept moaning round the house. Dark and cheerless was the scene without, yet still darker and gloomier were the thoughts of those within, whose hearts, so lately light and happy, were now heavy with inexpressible anguish and dread, such as those only who have known such trials themselves, can fully enter into or realize. Great was the grief and trouble that had fallen upon them, for he, the fond father, the tender husband, was now stretched lifeless on a couch from which he might never again rise, but to be

taken to his final abode and resting place—the grave. Too deep for words is their sorrow, who see the life so inestimably precious and dear to them, fast ebbing away, and that form, so lately vigorous, full of health and strength, now prostrate and helpless.

The young girl advanced noiselessly into the room, and motioning to an old domestic, who with sorrow-stricken aspect, now advanced from the farther end of the room towards them, to draw aside the curtains, which impeded the doctor's view; she stood watching his face with anxious looks, whilst he proceeded to examine his patient. A man of about fifty years of age, whose powerful, well-built frame shewed no small amount of muscular strength and activity, lay stretched (to all appearance) lifeless before him. The face had once been singularly handsome, indeed it still possessed no inconsiderable amount of personal attractions. In the young girl, who stood beside the doctor, could be traced the same fine features, softened in her to all the grace and

sweetness of perfect feminine beauty. The same high brow, over which fell a profusion of wavy chesnut hair, is now fast becoming silvery with age, hers thrown back from her fair face, and falling in rich, clustering curl upon her shoulders; the same well-defined, beautifully arched eyebrow, the nose of perfect Grecian mould, with the well-shaped expressive mouth, could be traced in both father and child.

His eyes, alas! were now closed, and hers, of that lovely bright blue, so rarely seen, like snake violets, suffused with dew, shaded by their long, dark lashes, looked down with anguish on his closed ones, perhaps never more to look on his child with approbation and love.

The doctor gazed earnestly at the lifeless form before him, and as he gazed, an acute observer might have noticed an expression of great surprise on his, usually so immoveable, countenance. He hastily bent down over his patient, as if listening attentively to his low,

unequal breathing, and when, a moment after, he raised his head, no emotion of any kind was visible on his face: it wore its customary placid, rather cold exterior. He turned to the young girl beside him.

"If, Miss Graham, you will descend a moment or two into the drawing-room, I shall be better able to examine my patient. I will join you there as soon as possible."

The young lady bent her head in token of acquiescence, and quitted the room.

As she slowly and mournfully descended the stairs, a sound as of approaching carriage wheels made itself heard, and hastily exclaiming:

"Is it possible, so soon?" she sprang lightly forward into the hall just as the new comer, a tall, handsome young man, of about two or three and twenty, dressed in the sober garb of a clergyman, entered by the farther end.

"Better?" he hastily inquired, as after a warm embrace on either side, they retraced their steps towards the drawing-room.

"I do not know, I am afraid. Oh! Ernest, I am afraid he will never, never be any better; I have such a dreadful foreboding feeling at my heart, such a presentiment that the worst is yet to come!" Her tears fell fast.

"Hush, my dear, dear Mary. It is not like you to look so on the dark side of things. He may yet recover, and if, love," and his voice trembled in spite of all his efforts, "if it should please God to take him from us, I trust and believe that he would go to a far better place; and we know, dear Mary, do we not, that if we but follow in his footsteps, we shall assuredly rejoin him there. Yet, as I said before, he may still be spared to us for many years to come. But tell me, dear, how did it all happen?"

"Why you know that poor dear papa is always trying to bring that horrid horse, Brown Bess, thoroughly into training. Well, this morning, in spite of all mamma and I urged against it, he mounted her, and went off, intending, he said, to ride through the dirtiest,

longest lanes he could find, and bring her home regularly tired out. Hour after hour went by, and he did not return; we were so terribly anxious at last, that I was just going to send off Mark to see if he could hear anything about him, when they brought him home in the state he is in now."

"Insensible?"

"Yes—It was so horrible; I shall never forget it, never. Mamma fainted, and recovers only to go off again. Ellis is with her now. I sent Mark to Dr. Gerald, but he was gone some miles off to see some one else, and they had no idea when he would be home. So then, in desperation, I sent him to Hatfield to Mr. Morrice (we heard he was so clever, you know), and he came back with Mark, and is with papa now. He told me to come down here and wait. Oh! if he does but give us some hope!"

"He may, dearest, we will hope for the best."

"It is such a relief to have you here, dear

Ernest," she said, looking lovingly up into his face; "you can always comfort me better than any one else. There is poor Archie too," she added with a sigh, "he must be told, and was not Edward very much shocked when he heard what had occurred?"

"He was just gone out when the boy came, and I was in too much hurry to write before leaving. I left word though that I had been re-called home suddenly, my father having met with an accident; we shall doubtless, soon see or hear something of him. And about Archie, I think we had better wait and hear what Mr. Morrice says before we let him know anything of what has occurred. And, hark! I think I hear some one coming down stairs; perhaps that is he."

The brother and sister listened eagerly to the sound of advancing footsteps. Their doubt was soon at an end, for in another minute the door opened, and Mr. Morrice stood before them.

CHAPTER II.

. . . . . "Over Jordan's water,
Is it so far that now thou cans't not see,
Back to the shore where lonely stands thy daughter,
Sprinkling its rocks and thorns with tears for thee?"
H. F. Gould.

"My brother, Mr. Morrice," said the tremulous voice of poor Mary, who, with her eyes riveted on the cold, inexpressive countenance of the doctor, tried in vain to read therein some indication of the news he brought.

"I wish sincerely that the occasion of your return home was a more pleasant one," said Mr. Morrice, after a keen, rapid survey of the young man before him, "and that I was the bearer of less painful tidings to yourself and

sister. I grieve to say that there is scarcely any possibility of Mr. Graham's recovery. The injuries he has received are of so serious a description, that it would be a moral impossibility for him to survive them. Besides severe internal injury, which will be the immediate cause of death, his fall has occasioned concussion of the brain, which, did he live, would, I believe, eventually end in hopeless imbecility; several similar cases having come under my notice during my twenty years' practice."

"Oh! are you quite, quite sure? Can it really be that there is no hope left, that we are to lose him, who has always been so good, so kind? I cannot, cannot believe it!" exclaimed Mary, weeping passionately. "But at least I will be with him to the last." She was hastening from the room. "Stop, stop, pray, Miss Graham, you must not go! Listen —your father is no longer——"

He paused.—The large blue eyes were staring wildly at him, and with a cry so pite-

ous and despairing, that it roused even the doctor from his usual apathetic indifference, she sank senseless on the ground before him!

Ernest raised the lifeless form of his sister tenderly from the floor, and bearing her to a couch at the farther end of the room, gently chafed the cold hands between his own.

"My poor sister has interpreted your meaning aright, has she not, sir? My father," his voice faltered) "is now lost to us?"

"I grieve to say such is the case," answered Mr. Morrice. "When I first entered the room the pulse was fast decreasing; it has now entirely ceased."

"Then he died still insensible?"

"There was not the least sign of consciousness."

"My poor, poor father!"

He turned again towards his sister.

"It will be a bitter awakening for her," he said, gazing sorrowfully on the fair face, which but a few days back, he had seen so bright and happy, but over which the first dark

shadow of sorrow had now fallen, blighting that young happy heart with its withering influence.

Alas! poor Mary, thy sorrows have but just begun; dreary, dreary is the path before thee, cold and heartless the world, which has hitherto smiled on thee. Better thus to rest awhile, insensible alike to joy or pain.

"She will recover in a minute or two, if you continue to bathe her face with Eau de Cologne," said Mr. Morrice, as he watched Ernest's ineffectual efforts to restore his sister to consciousness. "Mrs. Graham, I understood from the servant, was also in a very distressing state from the effects of this sad affair. I will send a composing draught for both her and the young lady. I am extremely sorry to leave you in such trouble! Distance is no object with me, should you require my farther attendance; here is my card."

He bowed formally, and quitted the room.

"Rather abrupt," thought Ernest, as he listened to the sound of the doctor's retreating

footsteps, "he seemed in a great hurry to be off, but perhaps it is as well, I don't think he could be of much use to poor Mary. Mary," he exclaimed aloud, as a slight movement on the part of the young girl showed returning consciousness, "Look up, it is Ernest, Ernest," he repeated, as at length, opening her eyes, she fixed them wonderingly upon her brother's face. "Don't you know me, darling?"

"Yes, yes," she said, half raising herself, and gazing inquiringly about the room, "I know you Ernest, but where is papa? Oh! I have had such a dreadful dream!" She closed her eyes with a slight shudder. "I dreamt he, our own dear papa, was dead. Yes, and I remember the doctor was standing here, telling us, when—but Ernest, she exclaimed, doubtfully, as she saw his pitying, loving look, "it is not surely true? Oh!" she sobbed, as the bitter reality rushed back on her with all its force, "I remember all now, what is to become of us?"

"God will take care of us, love; and will give us strength to bear this our first great sorrow; though that it does seem very, very hard at first, I know myself, by my own feelings. But it is our duty to rouse ourselves, dear Mary, and bear up as patiently as we can, for we must try and comfort our poor mother and Archie. There is another, too, for whose sake you must struggle against too bitter and unavailing grief."

A faint color overspread the pale face of the young girl as she answered:

"Yes, yes, I will try Ernest, to aid you, always so good and unselfish. Do you think it would be better for you to break it to mamma, or shall I?"

"We must divide our sad duties, darling. You write a few lines to Archie, telling him of the accident, and that he is to come home immediately. It will prepare him a little, poor boy, to hear the truth when he arrives, and I will go at once to poor mother and break it to her as gently as possible."

And here we will leave the brother and sister, each to the performance of their sad task, and retracing our steps, give the reader a slight insight into their previous history.

Mr. Graham was the only son of a rich country squire, who, in addition to considerable landed property, had £6,000 bequeathed him by a rich uncle, who having spent the greater part of his life accumulating a fortune in India, returned to his native land at last to die, having, as the price of all his wealth, a diseased liver and ruined constitution. He divided the bulk of his fortune amongst his nearest relations, leaving the rest to charitable institutions. His nephew, Graham, had, when a boy, been a particular favourite with his uncle, and on his return to England, it was into his family that the wealthy nabob was received with every appearance of affection and cordiality. It is, therefore, not surprising that at his death, which took place shortly after his return to England, his nephew's portion was found greatly to exceed that of

his other relatives. But "all is not gold that glitters." Graham, though he appeared to the last degree amiable and obliging to his uncle, and had kept up a correspondence with him during the years of his stay in India, often telling his particular friends that "it was a great bore, but he should be well repaid for all his gammoning letters by the old cove's yellow boys;" was really a heartless, extravagant scoundrel, who in addition to his many vicious practices, added an insatiable love of gaming. Had his uncle known how his hardly-earned wealth would be squandered away, he would not have thus enriched his scapegrace nephew, but he died before any of the many rumours respecting Graham's extravagance could reach his ears. His nephew's wife was a pretty, gentle woman, whom he had married with an idea of increasing his means of expenditure, she having a fortune of £30,000. In this, however, he was disappointed, as his wife's guardians so arranged and tied up the property, that it

was impossible for him to lay a finger on the chief portion of it. At her death, the money was to be equally divided amongst her children, and, in the event of her dying childless, the whole was to go to her nearest of kin. Thus (excepting the yearly interest, which was also completely at her own disposal) nought of the wealth for which he had chiefly married her, came into his possession. Her guardians and friends had tried to enlighten her as to Graham's real character and pursuits: but his honied words and handsome person had won all too easily upon her young, unsuspecting heart, and it was not till too late that she found out the bitter mistake she had made in uniting herself to one with whom she had not one interest in common. He, once so loving and considerate, now seldom came near her, and when that rare pleasure was accorded her, too often did she hear bitter, upbraiding words in reply to her gentle, though firm, refusal to grant him means wherewith to continue his reckless courses. Bitterly disap-

pointed in that husband, whom she had once so fondly loved, she turned with redoubled tenderness to the young Herbert, a most engaging, warm-hearted boy, who repaid his mother's fond care, by giving her in return his whole affection and confidence. Oh! how often did that mother's prayer ascend to heaven for this her darling, her only one, that he might never, never be tempted by his father to follow him to his haunts of vice and crime. Her failing health caused her many a tear, for she felt she should not live long to watch over her Herbert, and guard him from the many temptations that would beset his path. The boy had never loved his father as fondly as his mother, and as he grew older, his bitter indignation at his heartless neglect, and unfeeling conduct towards her, changed what little natural affection had existed into a feeling of aversion and dislike. Neither did the father love his child. His mean, sordid nature shrank from a contact with a mind so generous and open, and he almost hated the

boy for the intense devotion and love he showed towards his gentle mother.

As Mrs. Graham became more and more convinced that her stay on earth would be but a short one, she tried from time to time to prepare her boy's mind for the sad change which awaited him, begging of him also never to forget her warnings and counsel, and, unless his father entirely altered the character of his pursuits, to keep as much aloof from him as possible. But any allusion to her death caused the child such bitter grief, such passionate outbursts of sorrow, that she at last refrained from alluding to the subject, thinking it cruel thus to embitter the short time they had to pass together.

Herbert was then about twelve years of age. He had hitherto been instructed by a resident tutor, a pious, well-educated man, with whom even the fond mother could safely trust her son, both for moral and religious instruction. It was chiefly to his care Herbert was to be intrusted after his mother's

death, which event took place at last most suddenly and unexpectedly.

Mrs. Graham was found one morning dead in her bed,—her gentle spirit had passed away in sleep. A gradual decline had been slowly yet surely undermining her strength, the worn out spirit had at last given way, and she had quietly and peacefully entered into that rest prepared for the people of God. A sweet smile of unearthly happiness was on her lips, and it seemed to the grief stricken Herbert, whom no persuasions or entreaties could prevail on to quit for one moment the bed of death, that she could not really be dead; she would surely hear and answer his imploring appeals, that she would return to her disconsolate boy. Unlike other children, he had seldom mixed with those of his own age; his whole thought had been for his mother, and therefore the void in the poor child's life was nearly insupportable to him.

Mr. Ferguson, his tutor, and an old and valued friend of her early life, were appointed guardians

to the youthful heir, and a letter was found addressed to the former gentleman, wherein were many parting instructions in regard to her son. Many were the tears the poor boy shed when he learnt from his tutor the extent of his mother's loving forethought and care.

Mr. Graham seemed for a short time somewhat sobered and saddened by the death of his wife, but he soon returned to his former pursuits, leaving his son completely to the care and guidance of his tutor. Months passed on, and gradually the boy regained his former health and spirits, though many a time was he found by Mr. Ferguson in the lonely churchyard, weeping bitter tears over his mother's grave.

We will here pass over the lapse of some years, during which nothing of particular moment occurred to those connected with our story, except the sudden death of Mr. Graham in an epileptic fit, brought on, the physician stated, by intemperance. His property was mortgaged to that degree, that after the

demands of his numerous creditors had been satisfied, there remained but the overplus of £200 of his once considerable fortune. Soon after his father's death, which took place when he was about eighteen, Herbert had left home for the University where he remained up to the present time, when, having attained his majority, he was upon the point of returning home.

Mr. Ferguson was daily expecting to hear some intimation of his being on his way thither, when he was startled one morning by receiving a letter in the handwriting of his former ward, with a foreign postmark. Great was the dismay and astonishment depicted on his countenance on reading its contents.

"DEAR SIR,—

"You will doubtless be surprised to hear that I am married. The object of my choice is in every way worthy of your regard and esteem, though slanderous, unfounded rumours may reach your ears to the contrary.

I must beg of you, for my sake, not to give any credence to what others may say, but wait to hear the truth from your affectionate,

"HERBERT GRAHAM."

"P.S.—In three or four days you will see us again in England."

Great was the tumult in the worthy tutor's mind on receiving this startling news. He set off immediately into Oxfordshire in hopes of eliciting some more clear information in regard to the sudden, unexpected step which his former pupil had taken (as he greatly feared unadvisedly) and without proper consideration. He there learned that the last term of his stay having expired, Herbert had left college (as they supposed) to return home. They had not heard of him since. A particular friend of his farther added, that the news of his marriage did not surprise him so very much, as he had known for a long time that Herbert was deeply in love with some girl in the town,

who or what she was, his friend had always carefully avoided mentioning.

Mr. Ferguson's suspicions that Herbert had been entrapped into marrying some girl far beneath him in rank and position, were strengthened by what he heard; but failing to obtain more definite information, he was obliged to return home, and patiently await the explanation promised him in Herbert's last letter. Though prepared, as we have seen, to hear that his former ward had made an imprudent match, his suspicions fell far short of the reality, and great was his sorrow when he learnt that the foolish youth had been inveigled into marrying the daughter of a small tobacconist, a girl much older than himself, and with nothing to recommend her but a showy, rather common, style of beauty. Alas! for poor Herbert! He had already discovered how uncongenial a companion he had chosen for his path through life. Her vulgar habits and ideas but ill-agreed with his refined, rather high-flown, tastes, and he

returned home, already half regretting the rash step he had taken, which the evident sorrow and vexation of his old tutor did not tend to lessen. He had but too easily fallen into the snare laid out for him. The father of the girl had not been slow to perceive the impression his daughter's beauty had made on the young heir, and from that time arranged for them to be as much together as possible, leaving his daughter to manage the rest. She, by well acted simplicity and guilelessness, contrived so to engage the young Herbert's affections, that he imagined himself irretrievably in love, and on his quitting the University, he being then of age, they were privately married. Blinded by love, he had thought her worthy to fill any position, and it was not till too late that the veil fell from his eyes, and he saw her as she was, an illiterate, vulgar-minded woman. Luckily for him, however, he was not doomed long to feel the effects of his ill-advised marriage, for at the end of a year, during which many were the disputes

and dissensions of the ill-assorted pair, Mrs. Graham died, leaving behind her a son, whose birth altered, in no slight degree, the fate of those with whom the interest of our story chiefly rests. The child was a puny, sickly boy, and the young father felt but little pride or interest in his new relationship. Shortly after his wife's death, to the surprise of all his friends, he embarked for America, taking the nurse and child with him. His wife's only sister had married and emigrated some years before. This Herbert knew, as also that they were childless, and perhaps a vague hope that he should be able to leave his boy in their care, and thereby relieve himself (at all events for the present) of what he felt to be rather an irksome encumbrance than otherwise, occasioned his journey thither. The event answered his expectations. The sister earnestly solicited the charge of the child, and after entering into an arrangement to pay her a yearly sum for his support, and for them to let him know from time to time how he was

getting on, the young father, relieved of his charge, returned to England with a lighter heart than he had known for many a day. Two years after he married again, an amiable, though rather weak-minded woman, in his own rank of life, who, in due time, presented him with three children, Ernest, Mary, and Archie; the two former we have already introduced to the reader. Herbert informed his wife of his former imprudent marriage, also of his having another child living, but the knowledge was to be kept most studiously from his children.

"There was no occasion to let them know of their father's foolishness. He thought it very probable they might never see their half-brother," (which was very true, as the child being brought up entirely by his uncle and aunt, felt no wish to return to his father, who he had always been told did not care at all about him.) "He knew of course," he added, "that the whole of his remaining fortune must at his death, in course of law, go to this his

eldest son, but he had already arranged for her to have a yearly income of £100, in case of her being left a widow, and he should proceed, in course of time, to make much more ample provision for her and the children."

Though a good Christian, and affectionate husband and father, like too many others, Mr. Graham trusted too implicitly that his life would be spared to fulfil all his plans for his children's welfare. And thus he went on year after year without taking any decided steps for their benefit, still thinking he had ample time.

In spite of the many instances of sudden death daily occurring around us, how seldom do we apply the warning to ourselves! Blindly do we continue to make our plans for the future, as if death, whose awful arm strikes alike both rich and poor, old and young, could not come nigh us; as if we knew the term of our existence, or held a charmed life over which death had no power. How many, brought up in ease and luxury, accustomed to

have every wish gratified, as soon as expressed, have been suddenly cast upon the world friendless, portionless, to make their way as best they may, midst coldness and neglect, when with a little forethought and care, the bitterness of being thus suddenly reduced from affluence to poverty might have been spared them.

We have seen how Mr. Graham's plans in regard to the future were frustrated by his sudden and untimely death. It remains now, but to state the present position of the members of his family, thus unexpectedly deprived of his aid and support.

Ernest, whose wish it had been to enter the church, had just succeeded in obtaining a curacy in the neighbourhood of London. He was shortly to enter upon his new duties, and had been paying a farewell visit at the house of an old school-fellow, when he was recalled home by the melancholy news of his father's accident. Edward Martin, the young man with whom Ernest had been staying, had but a month before the period when our story

commences, proposed for the hand of Mary Graham, and as his prospects were good, his father, his only surviving parent, having lately died, leaving him a considerable fortune, and his character irreproachable, Mr. Graham had made no objection to his daughter's encouraging his addresses, intending to give her the sum of £3,000 as her marriage portion.

Mr. Graham's youngest son, Archie, an affectionate, warm-hearted boy of thirteen, was at school, little dreaming of the sad change, which had taken place in his hitherto happy home, though, as the reader is aware, a letter was even then on its way, telling him he must return home immediately, his father being dangerously ill. Poor child! Shocked and dismayed at the tidings it contained, he little thought that the worst was yet to come, that he should never see his father alive again.

CHAPTER III.

The whole wide world was a dream of youth,
The thought of deceit was unknown;
The look was all love, and the vow was truth;
T'was a vision—that vision was gone.

M. E. Beaufort.

Mrs. Graham, always weak and ailing, and inclined to magnify every little grievance into a serious trouble, was completely stupified by the real affliction which had overtaken her. The severe shock, which her nervous system had sustained, occasioned an attack of low fever, which rendered her totally unfit to attend the funeral, therefore, excepting, Mr. Morrice, and Edward Martin, who during the past week had been as much as possible with his friends,

aiding them in all the arrangements necessarily to be made, Ernest, Mary, and Archie, alone accompanied the remains of their father to the grave.

It was a touching sight, those youthful mourners bowed down by the weight of this their first sorrow. There was many a tearful eye amongst the group of bystanders collected round the church-yard, and many a murmured: "Poor young gentleman, poor things!" as the young Archie, breaking from the gentle, restraining hand of Ernest, who would fain have spared him that last deep pang, sprang to the side of the grave, and with convulsive sobs that shook his young frame, took one long, last look at the coffin, as they lowered it for ever from his gaze into the dread depth prepared to receive it. Who that has once felt can ever forget the unutterable pang of seeing the form, once so cherished and beloved, consigned to the cold silence of the grave! It seems almost a wrong to leave them thus to rest alone, apart from all they once held dear. Yet

so it must be, and after one long, lingering look at the newly made grave, with heavy hearts they quitted the spot, where now reposed all that remained of the once handsome, talented Herbert Graham. Oh! the misery of returning, to what seemed to them now their desolate home! Every room, every object served to remind them of the dear one they had lost. Mary, who had borne up bravely during the different sad scenes of the day, whispering loving words of consolation to both brothers, retired to the solitude of her room, there to relieve the pent-up grief of her own bursting heart in a flood of tears. About half-an-hour had elapsed, and she was sitting at her window, gazing sadly at the dreary autumn prospect of withered leaves and faded flowers, and thinking how the scene harmonized with her own mournful thoughts, when she was roused from her reverie by Ernest's voice at the door, begging her to come down with him immediately into the library, as he had something to tell her of the greatest im-

portance. Hastily drying her tears, she followed him down-stairs, wondering at the extreme precaution, with which he shut all doors at all in communication with the library. Giving a hasty glance into the dining-room as they passed, where poor Archie, worn out with grief, and the exciting scenes he had gone through, lay on the sofa, forgetting his trouble for awhile in a troubled sleep; Ernest, with a deep sigh, closed that door also, murmuring: "He need not be told yet, poor boy!" and at length rejoined his sister, who now for the first time, noticing the still deeper shadow, which had fallen on his face since last she saw him, stood anxiously awaiting him in the adjoining room.

"My dear Mary," he said, putting his arm fondly round her, "you have indeed tried to bear up against your own grief, that you might comfort and help us all. I cannot tell you how much I have admired your unselfish, loving care of poor mamma and Archie! yet, love (oh! that I should have to say it) there

is another trial in store for us, that will require all our fortitude to bear, a trial, of which I had little dreamed. You, I trust, will be taken care of, but my mother and Archie, what will become of them?"

"What do you mean? Pray, pray tell me, Ernest!"

"How would you bear to hear, Mary, that instead of being the possessors of no inconsiderable amount of money, we were penniless, absolutely penniless?"

"Impossible, Ernest, papa—"

"Our father was married before he knew our mother—the wife died, but the child, a son, lived. He will of course inherit the fortune that would otherwise have been ours.—Do you understand now, Mary?"

She passed her hand over her brow as if stunned.

"Where is he, then, the son—the other child?"

"In America, so the solicitor, Mr. Donald, tells me. He has been here for the last halt

hour, and it was from him I learnt all the particulars. The girl our poor father married was very much beneath him in station, and it was a most miserable affair altogether. A sister of hers in America adopted the boy (that is how it is we have never seen him), and he has been out there ever since. Mr. Donald knows the whole story, for it was through him the yearly sum was transmitted for the child's support. No doubt our poor father did not wish us to know of his former imprudence, and thought he would make it all right as regarded us before his death; but unfortunately he has neglected to make a will. We have looked in every imaginable place for it, and none is to be found, therefore, of course, the whole of his money amounting, Mr. Donald thinks, to about £24,000, will go to the heir at law. He had paid a considerable sum into an annuity office, that our mother might have a yearly income of £100; but what is that? In her state of health she will require almost the whole for her doctor's bill

alone. My scanty pittance of £50 a year, will, (with the strictest economy) only suffice for my own wants. I shall spare what little I can, but what will it be? A mere drop in the ocean. God help us, for He alone can!"

He sank into a chair, covering his face with his hands, in an attitude of the deepest dejection.

The sight of Ernest, usually so hopeful and patient, thus completely cast down and dispirited, sent a deep pang to the heart of poor Mary, and gently laying her hand on his arm, she said beseechingly:

"Don't, don't make yourself so very unhappy, dear Ernest. Listen. Perhaps this young man, papa's other son, may offer to make some arrangement, so that we may yet have a small portion of the money; I am sure he ought, for he must know that poor, dear papa would never have left us thus entirely destitute, if he had not died so suddenly. You would if you were in his place."

"Yes, Mary, you would, I would, but you

don't know what the world is yet, poor child. He does not care in the least about any of us, and how should he? He has never seen us, never even seen his own father; he will in all probability, remain in America, and share his newly-acquired wealth with those he has been brought up with. Mr. Donald is going to write directly on his return home, and tell him that he is" (he paused, and added bitterly) "now the possessor of £24,000."

"Well, then, supposing he behaves so, Ernest, it may yet not be so bad as you think. I am sure, Edward, when he hears, will see all about Archie's schooling. He is so young, he will remain some years still at school, so there will be nothing else to think about him for the present, and you would not mind Edward's helping us, so good, so kind as he is. Then," (and her pale, young face flushed almost into its former brightness and beauty) "when we are married, mama could live with us; I am sure he would not mind. What did he say when he heard all this?"

"Mr. Morrice left a few minutes after our return home—(he is a queer man that doctor.) I don't much like him, and Mr. Donald being arrived, and asking for some private conversation with me, Edward remained alone in the little room our poor father used to call his study. Really, though, he has been there a long time now—we ought to go to him."

"I will go at once myself, Ernest, and tell him all. Poor papa! always talking about what he would give me, as my marriage portion. If he had but—!" She sighed deeply as she added—"But how wrong! After the long years of kindness and love towards her, his child ought never to reproach him with neglect. Yes, I will go, though it is hard to tell him that he will now have a portionless bride. Yet I know him too well to fear it will make any difference to him—so generous and true!"

Pressing a fond kiss on her brother's brow, and telling him to rest quite quiet there till she returned, Mary (with a heart beating tu-

multuously, in spite of all her efforts for composure), directed her steps towards the room in which Ernest had told her she would find her lover.

Edward Martin was seated at a table, so absorbed in looking over some books and pamphlets, scattered in somewhat careless confusion before him, that he did not at first hear Mary's light step advancing towards him. He was a tall, well-grown young man. His hair, which was fair and curly, was a singular contrast to his dark eyes and brows, and though his nose and mouth were but tolerable, neither possessing any decided attribute of beauty, still his countenance was, on the whole, a pleasing one, particularly when animated and smiling. He started as Mary laid her hand gently on his arm, and looking up exclaimed in a tone of surprise:—

"It's you, love, is it? Where is Ernest? Have they not found the will yet?"

"No, Edward, they have not. Poor papa has neglected to make one."

"Really?"—then after a moment's pause, "Well, it will amount to much about the same thing in the end, for Ernest, I am sure, will carry out all your father's wishes in regard to yourself and Archie. So don't fret about that, dearest."

The last words were accompanied by a loving pressure of the little hand, still resting confidingly on his shoulder.

She burst into tears.

"Oh! if it were but so, Edward, but it is all different to what we thought!" and she proceeded with a trembling voice to tell him of the change which had taken place in all their affairs. As she went on, he interrupted her several times with exclamations of, "How very neglectful and imprudent of your father, what madness! and—and—"

Mary paused, and raising her eyes beseechingly to his face, said sadly:

"I cannot bear yet to hear my dear father blamed for neglect or imprudence, Edward."

"But, Mary, it was very imprudent of him,

and I do not think he has behaved at all well in regard to me either!"

She gazed at him in wondering surprise.

"No," he continued, quitting her side, and pacing hastily up and down the room, "not at all well. I consider I have been deceived, entirely deceived. He ought to have told me that he had another son living; or supposing that he did not wish to do that, to have made immediate arrangements, that in case of his death, you might yet come in for what he had promised you. It is not your fault, to be sure, but really many men in my position—" he paused.

She had listened to his words with a wondering look of blank astonishment, as if scarcely trusting the evidences of her own senses, doubting whether she indeed heard aright. Could this be her Edward, whom she had so trusted and loved? As he paused at the words, "Many men in my position—" she faltered:

"What do you mean, Edward. I do not understand, I think, surely—"

"Why, Mary, I don't mean to say anything unkind, or to reproach you; yet you must be aware that it is rather a startling piece of news for a man, when he has believed he would marry a girl in a good position, with, of course, a suitable portion, to be told that, through want of foresight and neglect, she is left without a farthing. Now my income, though considerable, would not"—he was interrupted by Mary, who confronted him with flashing eyes and quivering lips:

"Mr. Martin," she said, and her voice sounded even to herself strange and altered, "I have heard enough. Mary Graham would scorn to receive aught from a man who can thus think, thus act. Know, that if you had the wealth of the Indies, I would not accept your proffered hand; I would die sooner. You honorable, you true-hearted—how bitterly I have been deceived! So you loved me only whilst in a good position, with money

—alas! alas! where is truth, where is honor, if not in you, whom I have so trusted, so loved?"

"You are very high-flown, Mary: I only wanted you to look at things in a sober, practical point of view; no occasion for all this rhodomontade. Why, a girl of your sense must see how this strange news has altered all things. I only meant to tell you quietly and calmly that we should now be obliged to wait some years before marrying, as my income would not be sufficient alone to keep up the appearance I should like. I repeat, I do not blame you for all this, yet still I do not think I have been exactly, what you would call, fairly treated in this business."

"Have I not said it was enough, that I wished to hear no more of this (to me) insulting language? Do you think I would ever marry a man who considered he was making a sacrifice in marrying me? Go, Edward Martin, you have my contempt, my pity, that your nature should be so utterly worldly,

base, and selfish. Stop, I will return you your ring," and throwing it from her, as if the very touch of what had once been so prized and treasured, now burnt her hand with the contact, she turned towards the door, and throwing it wide open, stood, as if awaiting his departure.

With a murmured, "Absurd airs, ridiculous," though with a countenance pale, almost as that of her whom he had treated so heartlessly, Edward Martin strode across the hall, closing the door behind him with a bang that resounded through the house, and awoke poor Archie from his sleep.

Mary stood with hands rigidly clasped, listening to the sound of his retreating footsteps. Gradually her features lost the proud, haughty look they had worn during the last few minutes, and raising her clasped hands as if in supplication towards Heaven, she murmured: "Oh! God, strength, strength, to bear this last, bitter trial! Ah! surely I had enough without this, and yet, oh! rebelling heart, is

it not better thus? Is it not in mercy that the veil has been removed from my eyes, that. I now see him as he is, unworthy, despicable!" Her tears fell fast. She wept, poor girl, as many an one has wept, not because she regretted, or still loved, him who had proved himself so unworthy. No, she wept over the destruction of her ideal vision of love and truth, wept at this, her first discovery of the deceit and hollowness of the world she had hitherto believed so fair.

"Mary, dear sister Mary, what is the matter; has anything fresh happened?" said the voice of young Archie, who had entered unperceived, and stood by the sofa, on which the poor girl had thrown herself, listening with frightened anxiety to the low gasping sobs, which she tried in vain to suppress.

"Oh! Archie, darling, go away, you can do no good. I shall be better presently; leave me alone, dear, a little while."

"But what is it, Mary, has made you even more unhappy than you were before? Won't

you tell me, your own brother, Archie?" and the boy clasped his arms lovingly round his sister's neck.

"You are unhappy enough, poor boy, without being told anything else to make you more so."

"Now, sister Mary, you said a week or two ago, when I was home for the holidays, that now I was older, you should tell me things as well as Ernest. You said you should always tell me everything now; and indeed since all this trouble about poor papa, I have seemed years and years older."

"Yes, dear child, I meant to have told you, indeed you must have known soon, only,—but listen, here comes Ernest, I hear his step across the hall. Do not go, you may stay, darling, if you wish so much; perhaps it will be as well for you to know all at once. Ernest," as her elder brother entered the room, "Archie—I—we have all been entirely deceived in Edward Martin. He did not love me, as I once fondly imagined he did; truly, unself-

ishly. On my telling him all, Ernest, instead of consoling me under this new trouble, and telling me it would, of course, make no difference in his love for me, that he would do all in his power to help us in our trial, he showed me plainly by his manner that he now wished the engagement to be broken off. Such were not his words, but I saw immediately what he meant and wished, by the entire change in his manner. Although it was but an hour or two ago since poor papa was laid in the grave, he actually was unfeeling, heartless enough to blame him in hard, cruel words to me, his child. So soon, Ernest, to hear such words, I could not bear it!"

"The rascal!" exclaimed young Archie, with flashing eyes. "If I were but a little older, Mary, I'd thrash him till he was nearly dead, that I would. He should find out what it was to have insulted you so. But don't cry, Mary dear, Ernest will give it him well, won't you, Ernest?"

The elder brother smiled sadly as he answered:

"You forget, Archie, that it would be rather unbecoming in me, a clergyman, to *thrash* any one. Yet he shall hear my opinion of his conduct; the heartless, worldly scoundrel! My poor, poor Mary, when you so trusted him. I can well imagine your feelings, yet, love, I feel thankful, deeply thankful that God in his mercy has prevented your being united to a man with whom you never would have known real happiness. Edward Martin was not in many respects exactly the one I should have chosen for my dear sister, yet I believed he loved you truly, and I trusted it would all come right in the end. But now he shall, as I have said, hear of this; no man shall thus insult and wound my sister's feelings with impunity!"

"No, no, Ernest, if you love me, do not. Remember, I released him after all voluntarily; you cannot call him to account. Besides he would not understand you—his nature is too

mean and pitiful. Leave him to God, dear Ernest; how often have you said: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'"

"Yes, but, Mary, this is different, a brother ought—"

"Oh! Ernest, no; he would make you forget yourself by the way he views and talks of things; he would excite you, I know, beyond everything; no telling where it would end. Promise me, promise me, Ernest, that you will not go near him."

"There, there, Mary, compose yourself, we will talk it over when you are more yourself. One comfort at least, we have in all this misery. The discovery of the deceit of others, will only make us cling closer, and love each other more. We will trust in God, who will help us on our way, though it does appear a hard, difficult path that is before us. Remember those beautiful lines, dearest:"

"Never let the good despair,
While the cherub Hope is near,
Call on God, be not afraid,
He will ne'er refuse thee aid."

"Yes, Mary," said the young Archie, almost cheerfully, so bent was he on also consoling this his darling sister Mary; "I'll make my way in the world; think, when I am made Colonel (which I shall be some day), what I shall be able to do for you. You will marry some one, a precious deal better in every way than that good for nothing Edward Martin. But, what was it you told him that made him go off so? He was all right an-hour ago."

"Come with me, Archie, I will tell you," said Ernest, drawing his young brother's arm through his. "It will be much better for Mary to remain quiet for a little while."

He stooped, and kissed her tenderly, whilst he whispered:

"Don't fret, darling, he is not worth it. I will console Archie as well as I can about his commission."

So saying, he quitted the room, leaving poor Mary to her own sad thoughts.

CHAPTER IV.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.

LONGFELLOW.

It was about a month after the events narrated in the last chapter. Great changes had taken place in the Graham family since last we saw them. They had quitted their former place of abode, and were now living in a small retired villa in an entirely different part of the town from that in which they had formerly resided. Archie had returned to school, Mr. Fanshawe, his master, having kindly offered

to receive him gratuitously for one quarter, during which time they would be able to decide in regard to their future plans. The time originally fixed upon for Ernest to enter upon his duties as curate, had been already considerably lengthened on account of the trouble which had overtaken the family, but now that they were settled in their new abode, he could no longer delay his departure, and was to leave for St. John's Wood on the morrow.

Mary Graham, in her deep mourning dress, with her sweet, young face, now sobered and saddened, by the late scenes of trouble she had gone through, yet, perhaps, even more touchingly beautiful than it had ever been, stood at the window of their little parlour, her hand fondly clasped within that of Ernest, who was listening with deep attention, as she proceeded eagerly to unfold some plan she had formed for the future.

"I know already all that governesses have to bear. I have read about it," she said, in answer to some objection he had just made;

"I would willingly, oh, how willingly, go through anything. Besides, I have thought and thought, and there is nothing else to be done. Oh! never fear for me," she continued, cheerfully, "I am stronger than either you, or mamma think for."

A deep sigh from Ernest, was the only answer.

"Now, my own dear brother, you must not look so on the dark side of things. You, who are always saying, we ought never to despair, whilst we have a clear conscience, and God for our friend, to give way thus to doubts and fears, in regard to, what seems to me, a most feasible plan."

"If it were but myself, if I could bear it all instead of you! You, with your susceptibility, your inexperience of the world, to be mortified, humiliated; I cannot bear to think of it! There, you will promise to write, and tell me all about it, how this Mrs. Anderson treats you, not to hide anything from me; will you promise me that, Mary?"

"Yes, yes, but indeed I am sure I shall get on very well. Think, next Monday I begin. Two hours in the morning at Mrs. Anderson's, and an hour and a half at Mrs. Newham's in the afternoon. And now I have once got you, naughty boy that you are, to consent to this plan of mine, I want to ask you some questions which I do not wish mamma to hear anything about. What did Mr. Donald say Mervyn Graham wrote back about coming to England?"

"He said (just as I thought he would), that he did not intend leaving America, at all events for some years; he farther added (in rather a rude way, Mr. Donald said), that a solicitor of his own choosing would henceforth manage all his affairs for him. So we shall now know no more of his farther movements."

"Ah! how strange it all seems! What I once thought would have been ours. But, however, we will not talk about that, we had better rejoin mamma now, I think. You will be far away this time to-morrow, Ernest;

once more, pray do not fret about us at home whilst you are away. I shall keep mamma as cheerful as I can."

So saying, she opened the door leading into the next room, where, in an easy chair, propped up by pillows, sat an elderly lady, looking rather ill and worn, and gazing dejectedly at a card lying on the table, on which was written in large letters—"The Rev. E. Graham, No. 5, Portugal Place, St. John's Wood."

She turned as they entered.

"What a long time you two have been talking in that room! The tea is nearly cold. Poor dear Ernest! his last tea too here for some months to come. Mary, dear, just see that that card is put on all right, before you sit down."

"Mary is so tired, mother; she has been running about for me all day. I will see to it myself presently."

"Well, I know it will be forgotten at last, but, however, I cannot, in my state of health,

see to everything," and with murmured complaints of extreme exhaustion, Mrs. Graham sank back into her arm chair.

"Oh! it is all right, mamma, dear," said Mary cheerfully, "Ernest's things are quite ready. The card is the only thing to see to, and that is soon done. Now rouse up, and make a good tea. It is only two months till Archie comes home again for the holidays, and Ernest will honor us with a visit now and then too. I have been telling him about my teaching, and he quite agrees to it now."

"Because he can't do otherwise, poor boy. Oh! to think I should live to see my children put about so, and with my failing health, I am quite unfit for anything. The expense that it is! There is Dr. Lysle's bill come in to-day, £24—terrible in our circumstances, yet what is to be done? My nerves (always weak), have been so shaken by all that has happened during the last month, that I am absolutely unfit for any exertion whatever. I shall require nearly the whole of the £100 for

my own personal wants. There is Mary too looking thin and pale, yet she is going to teach a lot of tiresome children all day. My dear Ernest, you are not eating much tea; Mary, don't cry, I will not say any more, but really with what I have to bear, I don't think I can last long. What, finished already, Ernest! well, I wish you would go and see about that card, it quite worries me!"

"Oh! mamma," said Mary, after Ernest had quitted the room, "poor Ernest feels it so going away, and it being his last evening at home for some time to come, we really ought to try to be cheerful, and not make him more miserable by talking over our troubles, when he can do nothing to help us, poor fellow!"

"Well, Mary, it is all very well for you to talk about being cheerful; you are young, and have not the continual misery of ill health to bear as I have. I am sure I scarcely ever grumble on my own account."

"Well, dear mamma, let us be as happy as

we can this evening, at all events. I will sing you some of your favorite songs."

Poor Mary! With all her efforts the evening passed slowly and sadly away, and it was a relief to her to find herself at last alone in her own little room. With Ernest gone, that dear brother, ever so willing to aid her by his counsel in trouble, the one to whom she could always confide her sorrows and be comforted, with him no longer there to cheer her, she would indeed be desolate. Her mother, who, though she loved her children fondly, and was beloved by them, with her querulous complaints, and fretful exacting ways, would require continual care and attention, and though Mary had spoken cheerfully to Ernest, and had told him she had no doubt she should get on very well giving lessons, her heart, in reality, sank within her at the thoughts of this new, strange era in her life, and her tears fell fast on the little Bible, which she opened in hopes of finding therein consolation and peace.

And she was not disappointed. Its sweet promises of protection and guidance in every trouble sank like balm on her wounded spirit, and it was with a lighter heart that she at length sought her pillow and fell asleep.

o o o o o

The next morning, after many a fond embrace, the brother and sister parted, Ernest repeating his injunction to "write often, and tell him exactly how things were going on at home."

After his departure the days passed slowly and sadly enough, till the Monday at last arrived, the day on which Mary was to commence her new life of teaching. It happened most unfortunately that it was a wet morning, and Mrs. Graham cried nearly the whole of breakfast time, lamenting that "her child should now be obliged to risk her life and health by going out in such weather as that." It was in vain Mary reminded her of how often she had been out in the rain, and had suffered no

ill effects from it; also how many times she had already done so on errands of business or pleasure.

Mrs. Graham was determined to look on the dark side of things, and all Mary's arguments and consolations were completely thrown away. Therefore it was with a heavy heart that she at last left her to the care of their faithful old servant, Martha, who having earnestly solicited to be allowed to remain with them, and share their fallen fortunes, they had at last consented to her doing so.

We will not describe this, Mary's first day of initiation into the duties of her new position. A letter written about a month afterwards in answer to one from Ernest, will give the reader the best idea of the mortifications too often attendant on the life of a governess:

"My very dear brother,

"Your letter gave me great pleasure; I am happy to hear you like the place

and the people you are with. Your description of the little church, and the way in which the services are conducted, made me quite long to see it all! And those dear people, the Nortons, how kind to have you there so often; you will not be dull after all as I thought. Hearing that you are so comfortable and happy, dear Ernest, makes me better able to bear my own little annoyances and vexations.

"You beg of me to tell you frankly how we are getting on at home, and how I like teaching. Well, as you are so very anxious to know the real state of the case, I will not disguise a few little unpleasant truths, trusting when you hear them, you will not fall into one of your desponding moods, and set down your poor, common-place, little sister Mary for a martyr; but will think of the people who can behave in such a way with the contempt they deserve, and laugh with me over their absurd ignorance of what is right and proper. As I told you in my last letter, all was going on very smoothly at the Ander-

son's although I now and then saw plainly enough that Mrs. Anderson was no lady. Is it not ridiculous, Ernest, she seems afraid, absolutely afraid, of talking too familiarly with her governess. I have seen her quite check herself when she has been behaving at all sociably. A speech of hers the other day will best show you her notions on the subject. She was regretting to me that she could not have a resident governess. I said, 'Why not?' 'Oh!' she answered, 'it would be so awkward you see. I really should not know how to behave to her. It would not do to treat her like a friend, and yet the children would notice it, and be disrespectful if I did not make some difference between her and the servants. I know how it would be. I should be forgetting myself, talking with her and making free.'

"The idea, Ernest, of her actually saying all this to me! She, a tradesman's wife, because she is rich, and her governess poor, considers her beneath her notice. I felt my face becoming

crimson, but tried to answer as composedly as I could, 'Well, of course, Mrs. Anderson, you are quite right not to have a resident governess, if you do not know how to treat her.' That answer might be taken in two senses you see. About a day or two ago she asked me whether I would come that afternoon from Mrs. Newham's, and take charge of the children, as she was going to have a dinner party, and the servants would be all so engaged, they would not be able to see to them. She added, 'A girl from Hatfield has always done it for me before, but I thought you might just as well stay, Miss Graham, and have the half-crown, instead of her. The children will come into the drawing-room in the evening, and you can too if you like.' I thanked her for her extreme kindness and condescension, but, of course, declined both offers. I was glad to show her for once that I think she forgets herself in speaking thus to her governess. Now Mrs. Newham is very different; but then she is a lady both by birth and edu-

cation, which Mrs. A. is not. I do believe, Ernest, half the miseries and mortifications poor governesses have to endure is through their being obliged to teach the children of moneyed nobodies, who value and estimate people according to what they have, not what they are; and who, knowing that they owe all their importance to their wealth, look down upon those who have it not. Now I think I hear you say in your dear, grave voice, 'Oh! Mary, pride, pride;—do not make birth and education of such paramount importance. What is either, provided there be no true, honorable spirit? A true gentleman is he who scorns to do aught that is base or mean.' Yes, and you are right, brother mine, I would be the last to look down upon a person, whatever his birth and position had been, provided he was now a noble, upright, true gentleman, in the real sense of the word; but I mean that I think those qualities are more seldom found in this second rate, moneyed set. They, generally speaking, do not seem to understand

what a fine feeling or tact is; it is not in them to do so.

"But how selfish you will think me, thus, to fill my letter with things all concerning myself, but you oblige me to enter into details by your very many and minute questions in regard to my governess's experiences.

"I have just had a letter from Archie. He seems to be recovering his spirits, dear boy, which makes me so happy. If, as I said before, you and he are but more comfortable, that alone will form my happiness.

"You ask me particularly about my cough, and fret about my being obliged to go out all weathers; which is very naughty of you. When once this horrid winter is over I shall be all right again; so no more disconsolate grumblings over me.

"Oh, my own dear brother, we have much very much to be thankful for. Our way is now clear before us, and though things are very changed from what they used to be, we are still more fortunate than many others who have

much harder trials to bear. Do you remember your own beautiful sermon? 'All things work together for good to those that love Him.' You bear things so patiently that concern yourself, I must beg of you to do so in regard to me also.

"Now good bye for the present, and be of good heart, my brother.

"Ever your affectionate sister,

"MARY GRAHAM."

Letter from Ernest to Mary.

"MY DEAR MARY,—

"I received your letter this morning. I must own, in spite of all your entreaties to the contrary, I felt very grieved to hear of the many annoyances to which my dear sister was subjected through her efforts to obtain a livelihood. Yet (as you so justly say) it is indeed wrong to repine and murmur over our trouble, when we know who directs and orders all things. I will not make you unhappy

by doing so. We will trust, darling, that before very many years, things will be altered for the better; and it will be no longer necessary for you to give lessons. When I succeed in my efforts to obtain a living, which I hope to do some day or other, and not go on as a poor curate with but £50 a year, all my life, you will both live with me and keep my house.

"Oh, how happy we should be! However, it is too bright a picture to be conjured up just now.

"I lay down my pen and sigh, thinking of the long time that must inevitably elapse ere my hopes are realised.

"But there is Archie growing up now; he will make a bright man I am sure. We must manage to keep him at school for a year or two; a good education he must and shall have. I was thinking, with his abilities, Mr. Fanshawe might keep him as a sort of under teacher for the lesser boys, when he is fifteen, thereby enabling him to continue his own

studies under the different masters. But we will see about it when the time comes.

"Now to other things.

"In mother's last letter she told me you were looking far from well, and had a terrible cough. Now, generally speaking, poor mother's sad version of things rather amuses me than otherwise; such as the great trouble of the windows rattling so, and the doors requiring to have baize nailed down them, with an account of which fearful undertaking, she nearly filled her letter last time, yet in regard to you I am more seriously alarmed. Pray have advice if that cough continues; you don't know, darling, how wretched it makes me to think you are perhaps, in your thoughtfulness for, and care of others, neglecting what is so valuable and precious to us all—your own health and strength. Mind you tell me when next you write the whole truth as regards yourself. No more subterfuges, Mary.

"With best love to all.

"Ever your affectionate brother,

"Ernest Graham."

Mrs. Graham had not exaggerated in respect to Mary's health. The trouble and anxiety of the last few months, with the continued, unavoidable exposure to all kinds of weather, had done its work, and she was sadly changed. This letter from Ernest, however, roused her effectually to a sense of the imprudence of not having advice in time, and in her next letter he had the satisfaction of hearing that she had consulted the family physician, and under his care and treatment, was regaining her former health and strength.

CHAPTER V.

The hollow world will greet thee with a smile,
While Fortune smiles;
But should she fickle prove,
False friends desert.

"Do you know whether the girls mean to invite Mary Graham to their Christmas party?" said Dr. Gerald to his wife, as he was preparing to depart on his usual morning's round of professional visits. "I do pity that poor girl so! Being obliged to teach, and who would have thought it, living in the style they did when they first came into the neighbourhood."

"Why, you see, it is very awkward. We are, of course, going to have the Marshalls and the Foresters, and I don't know whether

they would quite like to meet her. They are so proud, aud would look down upon her rather, being a governess—they might wonder that I invited her to meet them. Her position is so different now, that I really—"

"Well, I really think you ought, that is all. A ladylike, pretty girl, her only fault that she is poor. Invite her, I say, and let the Foresters and Marshalls think what they please; it would be a good thing for them, if they had her looks and manners. We can do as we like surely, and are not bound to consult them in everything."

"No, of course not in everything. But you men do not understand the difference it makes—"

"To be poor! Well, I am sure, I am beginning to see it now, and hope and trust neither you nor the girls will ever live to feel it, that's all. Do as you like, only I think it is a great shame to look down upon such a nice girl as Mary Graham, just because she is obliged, through her father's neglect, to give

lessons. I can tell you, I would much rather see my daughters intimate with her, than with those affected, simpering Foresters or Marshalls."

So saying, taking up his hat and stick, the worthy old doctor hastened out of the room in high wrath over his wife's extreme worldliness.

"You were quite right, mamma, I am sure," said Miss Isabella Gerald, a young lady about 22 years of age, with a pretty, though rather inanimate, looking face, who had entered the adjoining room during the foregoing conversation, unobserved by her father, the folding doors between the two rooms being partially closed; "quite right, for neither the Marshalls nor the Foresters would like to see Mary Graham at our house, and I am sure I should not either. We have always kept our parties so very select, and I am not going to alter now just for her. The idea of papa! But, as you say, he does not know anything about such things; men do

not understand the line we women are obliged to draw about position. Yet some do—Edward Martin, for instance, knew better than to marry her when he heard how they were left without a farthing."

"Yes, of course, my dear—oh! never fear. Your father will think better of it; he was only a little obstinate and hasty this morning, as he is sometimes. And even then he said we could do as we liked, and I have quite made up my mind not to invite her."

"Why, mamma, in more senses than one it would not be advisable, I can tell you. Just think, Mrs. Newham is so foolish as to have her sometimes to spend the evening, when she has some friends. The Marshalls were telling me all about it. They said they, of course, took very little notice of her, indeed most of the girls there entered into a sort of compact to shew, by their behaviour, that they were astonished at Mrs. Newham's asking her at all. So they got into a sort of little circle, talking and laughing, and left her alone at the

other end of the room. Kate said it was such fun! She looked so mortified, and did not seem to know what to do with herself. That was before any gentlemen came; however, she knows how to attract them fast enough. Kate says it was quite disgraceful the way she went on talking and flirting with them! There was Frank Millwood scarcely left her side the whole of the evening. I must say I am astonished at him. There, his mother and sisters will soon put an end to any of that nonsense. But that will just show you what she is; I would not have her come to our house for anything, George Maitland just coming on about me too. She would be using all her arts to entrap him, you may be sure. Not to be noticed by any of the ladies of the company, but to have a lot of gentlemen paying her attention; I should be ashamed if I were she."

"Well, as to that, my dear, you see if the ladies of the neighbourhood will not notice her, she cannot help it. You may depend, she would be glad enough to be intimate with

them, if they would with her. Why, don't you remember, she called on us a short time after they had got settled in that little cottage place of theirs, wanting to get in here, but I think she saw pretty plainly by your manner that, in her altered circumstances, we had no idea of such a thing; so she has not been since. I feel for the girl, and would do anything to aid her in a proper way, but as to making a friend of her, I should not think of such a thing. So set your mind at rest, my dear, no one shall come between you and George Maitland, though I think it would not be very likely, were he to see this wonderful Mary Graham, it would at all alter his mind in regard to my Isabel." And with a fond smile, Mrs. Gerald patted her daughter's cheek, and told her to go and put on her things to accompany her on a morning call.

When the Grahams had first come into the neighbourhood, the Misses Gerald had called, and returned home full of the praises of "that sweet girl, Mary Graham," saying, they should

be so glad to have her for a friend, just the sort of acquaintance they should like. "And," added Miss Isabel, "we saw her brother too, passing through the hall, such a splendid figure, such beautiful dark eyes! Oh, really, mamma, when we ask her to our next party, I do hope she will come; it would be quite an acquisition!"

A short time after this, Mr. Graham's death, which so completely altered his children's prospects, lessened also, in no slight degree, the warm attachment and interest of Miss Isabel towards Mary Graham, which, from that time, considerably cooled. "The handsome brother," Ernest, left the neighbourhood, and his sister became a poor governess; therefore, as we have seen, from the above conversation, the ladies of St. Albans had determined to enlighten her, as far as possible, as to the change which had taken place in their relative position.

Poor Mary! it was a bitter lesson! She was now beginning to perceive, that, in the

world's eye, wealth and position were of paramount importance. Many were the mortifications and slights she had to bear, but the consciousness that they were undeserved, and her trust and faith in God, who would not, she knew, allow her to be tried above that she was able, helped her to bear it all patiently. Her pride too, kept her from showing how deeply she was wounded by the unkindness and neglect of those, who ought to have done all in their power to soften the hardness of her lot, instead of thus increasing her troubles. One kind friend she had in Mrs. Newham, a truly Christian woman, who aided and comforted the friendless girl in every way in her power, and laughed to scorn the petty malice of those, who would fain have persuaded her to do otherwise.

"Did you ever see anything so shameful," she said indignantly to her husband one evening after a party, the very one alluded to by Miss Isabel Gerald to her mother; "did you ever see anything so shameful, William,

as the behaviour of those girls to-night, towards Mary Graham? I am sure, if she had been poison, they could not have avoided her more. I was with her as much as possible, but had so many things to see to, that I was obliged to leave her often. The poor girl came into my room to put on her things at last, alone, as usual. She went on talking for a minute or two, trying to be cheerful, but gave it up at last, and burst into such a passionate fit of crying that I was quite frightened.

"'Oh! Mrs. Newham!' she said, 'pray do not ask me to spend the evening here again. It was very kind of you, but, indeed, I—I—cannot bear it—to be treated so! You must have seen, noticed—'

"I told her I had noticed, and felt indignant at the shameful way in which they had behaved to her, but said it would never do to give up in that way, that I should be quite offended if she refused to come when I asked her, that it was just the way to show she did

not care in the least about them. A likely thing that they are going to drive that poor girl out of every proper society. I will not leave her so much to their tender mercies another time, though, and so I told her. She thanked me so, poor child, but went away very dispirited, spite of all I said to comfort her; oh! William, I really cannot tell you how indignant I feel! I should like those girls to be reduced themselves, and feel all that they have made her feel. Talk about Christian-like behaviour! They showed, I think, a truly Christian-like spirit this evening; the world is all they think of. A dear, good girl as she is, to be treated so! Don't you think her very pretty, William. Such sweet blue eyes!"

"Yes, very, my very enthusiastic, good, little wife; why, you have worked yourself up into quite a rage over her wrongs; indeed you look so hot and angry, that I really think you had better go to bed at once, and sleep off some of your wrath. But I quite agree in all you have said," he added more seriously,

"and next time Mary Graham is here, I shall make a point of paying her marked attention, just to show them that I think her as good and better, than any of them. Poor girl! To be humiliated in that way. There, good night, my dear, you have a staunch ally in me you see."

Oh! it is a blessed, blessed thing that there are some true, loving hearts in this dreary world, some, who do not only profess, but act up to their professions of Christianity, who care not what the world says and thinks, so long as their conscience tells them they are acting right. Therefore will our faith in goodness and truth not utterly die out, whilst we see such, nobly doing their part to comfort and aid those less fortunate ones, whose lot, without their loving sympathy and help, would be so doubly hard to bear. Truly may it be said of such:

"They sojourn in the world, and yet apart,
They dwell with God, yet still with man they feel;
And bear about for ever in the heart
The gladness which his spirit doth reveal."

CHAPTER IV.

About a week after the conversation mentioned in our last chapter, Mary Graham might have been seen looking eagerly from time to time from their little parlour window, as if expecting some arrival. Mrs. Graham, too, seated in her usual place before the fire, seemed rather restless and uneasy.

"Really," she said, as Mary turned at last in disappointment from the window, "not coming yet! He is behind his time. I do hope no accident has happened—that he has not been pushed off the coach; or, oh dear! oh dear! a thought has just struck me."

"What, mama?" inquired Mary, considerably alarmed by this sudden outbreak.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Graham, looking up with a most woe-begone expression of countenance, "I daresay he was too late for the train, and has to walk all the way home, and with his nice clothes, he will be very likely kidnapped, or have them taken away and be left in a ditch. Oh! my poor Archie! he may even be murdered."

"Not yet, mother," said a cheerful, merry voice behind them, "here I am safe and sound, and old Martha was the first to see me after all: she let me in quietly that I might surprise you both. How are you, Mary, and mother you, too? You must not mind my laughing please, I can't help it! 'He may even be murdered!'" And the boy's merry peals of laughter echoed through the usually quiet, dull little room. "But really it was not my fault being so late," he continued, "for I met young Gerald, and of course, was obliged to stop just a minute to

say how d'ye do, and he kept me longer than I had thought, telling me all about a grand party his sisters are going to have this week. He gave me the names of the people who are to be there, but did not say a word about you, Mary; there an invitation will come yet, you may be sure, for they seemed to have taken such a fancy to you. Oh! I am so glad to be at home again, and Ernest, too, will be here for a day or two next week won't he?"

"Yes, dear, but not for longer, he is so very busy this Christmas time. I, too, am so glad to have you at home again, dear Archie!"

Yes, indeed the happiness of that meeting made up to Mary, in a great measure, for the three dreary, miserable months of toil and care that had passed away so slowly. She thought as she gazed on her young brother's face, now so bright and happy, how contented she would be to bear all, everything, so that he might not be made to feel, as she had done, the real bitterness of poverty; her trou-

bles would be light so long as her two dear brothers were happy. Yes, if we could choose, often would we far rather bear the heavy burden alone so that those we loved were spared—so that nought of pain or care came nigh them. Yet that very feeling shows us that there is still something which is too dear, too prized. All save this we can bear, is still our cry, and, therefore, the blow falls, and strikes at this our too fondly cherished idol.

Could Mary have foreseen the many hours of misery this darling younger brother would cause her, her heart would indeed have been nearly broken; but we are mercifully spared an insight into futurity, and she felt happier than she had done for many a long day as she looked on his handsome face, glowing with health and strength, and listened to his merry schoolboy chattering of all that had occurred during his three months' absence from home.

Mrs. Graham, too, forgot, for a time, her

numerous ailments and grievances, so absorbed was she in listening to, and admiring her "dear boy." Indeed this first happy evening passed away so quickly to all parties, that when old Martha appeared at the usual time for prayers, they were astonished at the lateness of the hour.

"Ah! Miss Mary," said the old servant, smiling, "Now Master Archie is at home, the time passes quicker than it used, and I hope you will get your bright looks back again this holiday time, or we shall have Mr. Ernest scolding us all for letting you work so hard."

Archie looked anxiously at his sister.

"Why yes, Mary, you are much thinner and paler than you used to be; does the teaching prove too much for you? You have not told me yet how you like it."

"Because I did not wish to frighten you by my ecstasies over it, and Mrs. Newham," she answered gaily; "she is such a dear, kind woman, that I quite love her! But Martha

is waiting, so I must reserve my praises of her for another time."

One little incident on that otherwise happy evening occasioned Mary considerable uneasiness.

As they parted for the night, she remarked gaily:

"How tall you are growing, Archie, really getting quite manly!"

"Yes, Mary, I am getting on, am I not? fourteen last month, you know. It won't be very many years before I shall be on my way for my Colonelcy," he added merrily; then suddenly recollecting how altered all things were, he checked himself with a deep sigh. "Ah! I forget, it cannot be now, about my commission I mean, but really I cannot bear yet to think of being anything else!"

He little thought the pang those few words sent to his sister's loving heart, who, after bidding him good night, turned sorrowfully into her room.

"Poor Archie!" she thought, "what a great

disappointment it seems to him about his commission, and I am afraid it is quite impossible for him to have it now. I do hope he will turn more willingly to something else after a time! It would make me so wretched to see him forced into being something else against his will; indeed I could not bear to see Archie fretting and unhappy!"

Ah! Mary, "could not bear." What are we not obliged to bear in this world of change and sorrow! Many a fond mother and sister have seen all the bright hopes they had indulged in regard to the future of some darling son, some dearly-loved brother, suddenly annihilated, and the airy fabric they had raised dashed an utter ruin to the ground. Yet they have borne it, as we must learn to bear all trouble sent us by Him, who knows best what is for our good, who often takes away what is dearest, most prized, that we may learn to fix our deepest affections and hopes not on things of the earth, but on things above, immutable, everlasting.

Mary thought long and anxiously that night, trying to devise some plan for obtaining the means whereby Archie's earnest wish to enter the army might be gratified. But in their circumstances how would it be possible? She knew no one to whom she could apply with the least chance of success. "It cannot be thought of," she at last murmured; "he must give up the idea, poor boy! But it may be all right yet, he may even change his mind as he gets older, and no longer wish it. It is wrong thus to anticipate troubles. If Ernest knew, how he would blame me!" and Mary tried to forget her foreboding thoughts, but, though she succeeded in a measure then, and often afterwards, those words of Archie's, "But I really cannot bear to think of being anything else!" would recur to her mind, and occasion the same anxious apprehensions for the future. About a week after Archie's return, a letter from Ernest, saying he hoped to be with them on the following day, caused great excitement at "The Cottage;" indeed,

as the time approached for his arrival, Mary and Archie declared they could no longer remain in the house, but must go to meet him at the station. So, in spite of wind and weather, the two set off, Archie chuckling gleefully over the surprise it would be to Ernest to see them already there waiting for him. They were just in time, for the train was already in sight, and Mary's heart beat quicker and quicker as it approached the platform, and she bent eagerly forward to obtain a glimpse of that dear face, for the sight of which her heart had so often yearned, during the past three months.

Yes, there he was, looking well and happy, with a glad smile on his face as he caught sight of the two dear ones awaiting him.

"Mary, Archie, such a snowy day to come and meet me, how kind of you both! Really we ought to go away sometimes from those we love, if it is only for the delight of meeting after absence," remarked he, when the first greetings and enquiries over, he drew Mary

arm through his, and they proceeded to retrace their steps towards home.

"Yes," answered Mary, "and I think, Ernest, those who have never known suffering or trouble, do not so thoroughly appreciate and value such moments of happiness, as those who have; I mean it is more a common thing to them, and, therefore, not so deeply felt."

"Just so, darling; we seldom value things as we ought, till we have been deprived of, and made to feel the want of them."

There was a moment's pause, for each thought of the vacant place in their little circle, of that dear one loved and lost, never to return. What would they not now have given for one word, one look of love!

Archie at length broke silence by asking Ernest how long he would be able to stay with them.

"I am sorry to say only till Saturday, for we are so particularly occupied this Christmas time. I should so like you both to see our church, it is so beautifully decorated!"

"Well, I hope we shall be able to come next year," said Archie, "I am longing to hear you preach again. How well I remember your first sermon, Ernest, when we went up to London to hear you. Mary was much more nervous than you seemed yourself. I was so unfortunate as to sit next her, and she kept catching hold of my hand and squeezing it under her cloak when you said anything particularly impressive or beautiful; then if you paused a minute, or seemed at all at a loss, my poor hand suffered by getting such a terrible pinch. I was glad enough when it was all over; I should have been black and blue if your sermon had lasted much longer."

"Well, I am sure, Archie," exclaimed Mary laughing, "you were as excited as any one. I had enough to do to keep you at all quiet. What do you think, Ernest, directly after we got out of church, he called out loud enough for every one else to hear. 'Hurrah! for Ernest, he will be a bishop some day!'"

Ernest smiled rather sadly.

"There seems to be a fair chance of it at present, Archie, a poor curate with but £50 a year."

"Well, I do not think that has much to do with it. One must make a beginning, dear Ernest," said Mary, "and though I do not soar quite so high as Archie in my anticipations, still I do not think it at all likely that you, with your talents and energy, will remain as you are all your life. But here we are at home, and mamma is looking out of the window all impatience to get a sight of you."

Ernest sprang quickly forward, and after a hasty, though kindly greeting of old Martha, in another moment was in his mother's fond embrace.

"My dear boy! my own Ernest! once more together, thank God! I really have thought some times during that dreadful weather, so trying to my health, particularly after all I had so lately gone through, that I should not live to see you and Archie again.

But here we are, all together once more. There, don't stand, you must be so dreadfully tired, you have had quite a long journey. You must go to bed early, and have a day of rest to-morrow. Really not tired you say. Well, it is astonishing the immense amount of fatigue you young people can bear; I should be fit for nothing after such a journey as that."

And poor Mrs. Graham's astonishment at Ernest's unparalleled powers of endurance was unbounded.

"Ernest," said Archie, as, tea over, they gathered round their comfortable little fire-side, to talk over all that had occurred since last they met, "Ernest, what do you think Dick Marsden said the other day, just before I came home. We were talking about you, and he asked me how you liked the church where you were curate. I said 'Very much, it is all arranged just as Ernest likes. In his last letter he told us too that the church was being decorated so beautifully for Christmas. How I wish they would do it like that here!'

"'I am sure I don't wish any such thing. Why, you are a regular set of Puseyites. Father says when people get to chanting the Psalms, decorating the churches so grandly, and all that nonsense, they need only take one step farther to become Roman Catholics.'

"'Well,' I said, 'I think it a great shame that clergymen should be called Puseyites just because they have their services better arranged than others. I don't see any harm in that; indeed, I should think it was much better to do things well than badly, particularly when it is in praise of God. Such singing as we have down at our church, enough to make any one laugh, and I am sure that can't be right.' Well, so we went on arguing about 'High Church' and 'Low Church,' till we got quite angry with each other at last, and then I remembered that you told me once never to get into arguments about religion at school, that it was seldom done in a proper spirit, and ended only in each being more than ever convinced that the other was

in the wrong. So I said, 'We had better say no more about it, Dick, we can each have our own opinion, and I am sure we ought not to quarrel about such things.' And so it passed for the time, but I am very sorry the subject was ever brought up, for we said such bitter things to each other by way of argument, that we have never been exactly the same friends since; and yet, Ernest, I could not hear such things said without standing up a little, could I?"

"My dear Archie, there is a great difference as to the way in which you 'stand up,' as you call it, about such serious subjects. Generally speaking, it is much better for you, so young as you are, to avoid such discussions as much as possible; still if you hear things said that are untrue, you are not too young to say quietly and firmly that it is not so, and give your reasons for knowing it to be false. Then, after that, leave the other party to think and say what they please. I am very glad you have told me all this, for we can now have a

little conversation together on the subject, which caused your discussion with Dick Marsden. People object to the decorations of our church at Christmas, because we spend more time and take more trouble than they, who just carelessly tie a few bunches of holly together, and hang up about the church, seeming to think anything beyond that is needless trouble and labour. Yet if they do it at all, why not do it well; perhaps those very people would think no amount of trouble and expense too great in decorating their rooms to receive their friends. *We* do not think time wasted which is devoted to ornamenting our church, on this, the joyful anniversary of our Saviour's birth, nor that we can do too much in honor of Him who died for us."

"Oh! Ernest, how I wish you had been there to talk to Dick; he would soon have altered his opinion."

"I doubt whether he would have done so, Archie; unfortunately the bigoted prejudice against what is called 'High church notions'

is not easily overcome. Christians, with in reality the same hope and trust, who ought to be so united, spend their time in petty dissensions and disputes. It is a very grievous thing, and an evil that, unfortunately, rather increases than diminishes. If the time of persecution were to come over again, and, as in those former days of horror, men were called upon to give up their faith or die, I doubt not but that there would be quite as many martyrs found amongst the so called 'Puseyites,' willing to lay down their lives sooner than renounce the faith of their fathers; as amongst those, who thus charitably set us down as but one step removed from the church of Rome."

"I am sure there would, Ernest," said Mary. "Oh! if these dissenters would but understand that we have quite as great a horror of the errors of the Romish Church as they themselves! But, Ernest, one thing I wanted to ask you. Do you approve of the Litany being chanted?"

"No, Mary, decidedly not. The whole Litany is a supplicatory appeal for pardon and aid, and surely those solemn, earnest prayers for deliverance from evil, were never meant to be chanted or drawled out by some intoning priest. No—that I think people have a right to declaim against, and I for one do most heartily disapprove of it. But, Mary, you see though we do not chant the Litany, and only do what is strictly conformable with the rules of the Church of England, we are considered Puseyites."

"Oh! yes I know, Ernest; well let them think what they like, we know it is not so. I do believe it is partly owing to the slothful, ease-loving lives of some of the clergy, who conduct their services in one sing song way, and cannot bear to take the least trouble to render them more impressive to the congregation, which in consequence is generally composed of a sleepy, lounging set, who only go to church at all because it is respectable."

"Hush, Mary; we ought not to judge thus.

No doubt those clergymen act according to their consciences. They do not think it right to chant so much, or to devote the time that we do to the decoration of our church. We do, and I have given our reasons for thinking so."

"Well, I am glad to have heard exactly what you think about these things," said Archie; "but as you say, Ernest, it is very wrong to discuss and argue, such boys as we are, particularly when we get angry over it. I will not be drawn into it again."

"Quite right, Archie, and now we will talk of other things. Mother has nearly fallen asleep during this long discussion of ours. What is to be done about your schooling next quarter, my boy? There is a serious question for you!"

Mrs. Graham here roused up.

"I think, Ernest, if I am very careful of myself so as to avoid serious illness, I shall be able to arrange to pay something towards it; then I was thinking Mr. Fanshawe is so kind,

I really believe, considering the many years Archie has gone to his school, he will take him as a sort of articled pupil. You said in one of your letters a short time back, that when he was fifteen, he might teach some of the lesser boys, and so continue his own education. Now he is such a great fellow for his age, and looks so much older than he really is, that I should think, so highly as Mr. Fanshawe speaks of him in every way, he might even now be of use in the school. You remember what a great regard your poor father had for Mr. Fanshawe, and how willing he always was to do him any service; I am sure he will let Archie continue his education on those terms!"

"Yes indeed, mother, I think so too, and will write to him to-morrow on the subject; that is if Archie himself likes the idea," and he turned to his young brother inquiringly.

The boy drew himself up proudly.

"Like the idea, Ernest; well I think it would be strange if I could not put up with

a few things when Mary, indeed you all, have so much to bear. I am very pleased to have it arranged at all about my schooling, and any little annoyances I may have to put up with, I shall consider as my part of the trouble that is come upon us, and accordingly bear them as patiently as I can."

"There is a dear, good boy," said Mary, kissing him fondly; "I know you will get on very nicely; you will only have the little boys to see to a little. So if Mr. Fanshawe agrees (and I am sure he will) it is a settled thing. Well, really, Mamma, I think we ought presently to drink most particularly to the health of Mr. Archibald Graham, one of the masters of "Braidwood House School."

CHAPTER VII.

Let whatsoever else of good for me
In store remain,
This lieth out of hope, my father, e'er to see
Thy face again.

It was Ernest's particular wish, before his departure, to visit his father's grave, therefore the third and last day of his stay at home having arrived, he, Mary, and Archie proceeded in the direction of the churchyard, where Mr. Graham was buried. It was a bitter cold winter's day, the earth was completely enveloped in a white mantle of frost and snow. Very different was the aspect of all things to what it had been the last time those three stood together by their father's

grave; very different also were the feelings with which they now approached it. What changes had taken place within those few months! They had little thought when next they gazed on that little mound, how altered all things would be for them! Penniless, dependant on their own exertions for support, deserted by the friends they had trusted in—all was indeed changed!

"Oh!" said Mary, gazing sadly through her tears at the simple marble tablet now erected to his memory, on which Ernest had caused to be inscribed the warning words, 'In the midst of life we are in death,' "Oh! if poor papa could have foreseen the consequences of his delaying to provide for his children, we should not have been left thus destitute and forsaken. So as he loved us—how would he bear to see his child, 'his darling Mary,' as he used to call her, so treated by the world!"

"My dear sister, if, as I believe, he does look down on his loved ones from his bright

abode, he watches with pride and delight their struggles in the thorny path of duty; he sees how their characters and minds are being improved by the sacrifices they are called upon to make. Oh! yes, Mary, I feel myself that it is good for us to have been in trouble, and I have never loved you, my dear girl, so much as within the last few months, when I have seen, and admired, the patience with which you bear all your trials."

"But, Ernest, it is hard, oh! so very hard. I never come here without feeling wretched afterwards, and thinking how different everything would have been if he had lived."

"Well, dearest, things will, I trust, yet be different."

"Yes, they may, but he will never be with us again to share our happiness."

"We shall know, shall we not, that his far exceeds ours?"

"Oh! Ernest, Ernest, you are so good, so patient; if I were but more like you!"

"Do not speak thus, Mary, it grieves me.

You little know how often I, too, am tempted to murmur and repine over our altered lot. How often you have cheered me when I was dispirited and despairing! Do not think I mean to reprove you, love, I can well understand your feelings."

Poor girl! Those choking sobs were not for her father alone. She could not help remembering that the last time her brothers had stood by her side on this spot, another had been there too, that other whom she had then so fondly loved, and believed noble and true. Ah! where was he now, he who should have been still at her side to comfort and aid? He had left her, deserted her in the time of her utmost need.

"Do you know, Ernest," said Archie, who had hitherto remained silently standing beside them, "do you know, I think if I am ever tempted to do anything wrong, very wrong, I mean, one look at papa's grave would prevent my doing it."

"I trust the thought alone of how it would

grieve him would prevent it, Archie," said Ernest, gravely.

The boy gazed thoughtfully at the name, "Herbert Graham," engraved on the tomb.

"I will never disgrace that name," he murmured, "never."

Would that you had better remembered that resolution, Archie, in after years!

o o o o o

On their return home, Ernest found a most kind letter awaiting him from Mr. Fanshawe, saying he quite agreed to take Archie on the terms proposed. Great was the relief to the minds of all to know that he would thus be enabled to continue his education at a school where he had such advantages.

That last evening of Ernest's stay passed away only too quickly, and on the following morning, Mary and Archie accompanied him to the station.

"Oh! how soon Saturday has come!"

sighed Archie. "It seems as if it were only yesterday we were here to meet you—such a short three days!"

"Well now we must go on looking forward to our next meeting, Archie. At Easter I hope to be with you again. It is rather unfortunate your holidays coming always just at the time when I am most engaged, but, however, I have arranged it this time through the kindness of a friend, and hope to be able to do so again. There I must be off now, good bye, my dear ones. Mary, write as often as you can," and with many a parting wave of the hand, Ernest disappeared.

Mary turned away to hide her tears. It was no common every day parting that—Ernest was gone, Archie would soon follow, and she would be left once more to her dreary routine of teaching, with nought to cheer or relieve the dull monotony of her life, except those occasional evening parties at Mrs. Newham's, from which she always returned mortified and dispirited. O! those happy three

days, how quickly they had past, and yet how long each day, each hour seemed to her sometimes!

"Don't fret, Mary dear," said Archie, on their way home, noticing his sister's deep dejection. "Brighter days will come again for you I am sure, for you deserve to be happy. Remember what you are always saying to me when I am at all down-hearted. 'Never despair,' so long as you know you are doing right. There don't, I can't bear to see you cry,' and we shall have mamma, doleful enough already, in the very depths of despondency, if she sees you have at all given way."

Mary could not help smiling through her tears.

"Yes, poor mamma; she is so fond of Ernest, and makes sure each time he goes away, she will not live to see him come back again. There I will not cry any more," she said, dashing her tears away, "only I really felt so depressed, I could not help it. O! look," she exclaimed suddenly, gazing earnestly at

the figure of a gentleman advancing towards them, "Is it, yes, it is Mr. Morrice. I have not seen him at St. Albans since poor papa's funeral."

"Would you like to go out of the way Mary, and avoid meeting him?"

"Oh! no, dear, I will only put down my veil; I should not like him to see I had been crying."

A needless precaution for, on advancing nearer, and perceiving who it was he was about to encounter, Mr. Morrice deliberately crossed to the opposite side of the road to avoid them.

"Well, did you ever see anything like that, Mary? He evidently crossed, that he might not meet us. Never stopped to ask how we all were, as, I am sure, it would only have been civil to have done."

"He is a queer sort of man, dear. Ernest did not like him much. He always seemed in such a hurry to get out of the house."

"Well, I am sure if he had done us some harm, he could not avoid us more!"

They were still wondering over the doctor's strange behaviour, and trying to account for his marked avoidance of them, when their thoughts were diverted into another channel by the appearance of Mary's kind friend, Mrs. Newham.

"This is a lucky meeting, my dear," she said after the first salutations and enquiries were over, "you are just the person I was thinking of and wishing to see!"

"Indeed," said Mary smiling, "then I am very glad you have so soon gained your wish."

"Yes, I consider myself very fortunate. Well, what I want to know is this. Will you come and spend this evening with us? No one will be there but ourselves. If your brother would like to come too, we shall be very glad to see him, though I am afraid he will find it rather dull."

Mary glanced inquiringly at Archie, who murmured something about "being very much obliged, and liking very much, only mamma would be so dull. Ernest had left them to-day, and if they both went out, she would be fretting all alone by herself."

Mrs. Newham looked surprised and pleased at the boy's forethought and consideration of his mother.

"If your mamma would kindly forget we are strangers, and come too?" she said hesitatingly.

Mary's face beamed with pleasure. It was so seldom Mrs. Graham had any change, and if she could prevail on her to go, how glad she would be!

"Thank you so much! Mamma does not generally care about going out, but she may—"

"Make an exception in favour of my house for once," said her friend smilingly. "Well I hope she will, but anyhow we shall expect you, my dear, alone, of course, if your mamma

prefers staying at home. So good bye till this evening."

"What a sweet, pleasant woman!" said Archie, after they had parted from her, "Oh, I do so hope mamma will go!"

And to his great delight and astonishment, far from demurring, or making any objection, Mrs. Graham seemed pleased at the invitation, and readily consented to accompany them. Mrs. Newham's kindness to her child had so completely won her heart, that she was quite anxious to see people of whom she had heard so much.

Therefore at the appointed time, the three set off, Mrs. Graham on Archie's arm, a complete mountain of mantles and furs, to prevent catching cold. Mrs. Newham welcomed her guests, with her usual kindness of manner, and the whole party were soon chatting together, as familiarly as if they had known each other for years. Mary's two little pupils, very engaging children, a boy of eight, and a little girl about two years younger, soon made friends with

the "great boy," as they called Archie, and many merry peals of laughter proceeded from the little group. The time passed quickly, and pleasantly. After tea, the ladies played and sang together, and Mrs. Graham sat down to her favourite game of draughts, with Mr. Newham. Mary was engaged looking over some music, seeing whether she could find any pieces she knew, when her attention was directed to a little case which was hanging on her dress, having caught in the lace of her sleeve. She disentangled it, and was about to replace it on the little table beside her, when the clasp, already loosened, entirely gave way, and the lid falling back, she perceived that it was a small, beautifully painted, miniature. An involuntary exclamation of admiration and surprise escaped her, as she gazed on the speaking beauty of the face. It was a full-length miniature of a young man, about twenty years of age, whose tall, graceful figure showed to advantage, in the loose, careless undress he wore. His left arm was in a sling,

and the other thrown caressingly round the neck of a large Newfoundland dog, who was looking up lovingly into his master's face. That face it was which so arrested Mary's attention, by its striking beauty of feature and expression. The rich, dark hair was tossed carelessly back from the broad, open brow, and the dark, earnest eyes, touchingly mournful in their expression, seemed so speaking in the deep melancholy of their gaze, that she could almost fancy they returned her look of interest and admiration. There was an expression of subdued sadness in the sweet, grave mouth; indeed, the whole face had the resigned, sober look of one, who had known some great grief, some overwhelming sorrow.

It was one of those faces which, once seen, one cannot easily forget, not so much on account of the features and colouring, perfect, though they too may be, as for the mind, the soul which animates the whole. Mary gazed on as if fascinated, but was roused from her rapt contemplation by the voice of Mrs. New-

ham, who had approached her unobserved, and was looking over her shoulder.

"Ah! Miss Graham, I see you are admiring that likeness. Is it not a beautiful face? Yet if you were to see the original (which I hope you will some day), I think you would agree with me in saying, that the artist has scarcely done him justice."

"The original!" exclaimed Mary, "do you know him, is he really like this portrait?"

"Yes, indeed, the very image, only (as I said before), I think, if anything, he is even more handsome than he is made here. He is the son of a very dear old friend of my husband's, now dead, as also his mother; there are some very romantic, terrible incidents connected with her death, which I will tell you of some day."

"Oh! will you now?" asked Mary, eagerly, "I should so like to hear them!"

"Very well, my dear, your mamma and brother are, I see, absorbed in their games, so we will have a nice little chat all to

ourselves, and I will tell you all about it. Well, his name is Arthur Mainwaring—do you like it?"

"Very much—Arthur—oh! it is very pretty, just the sort of name I should have imagined him to have, and, Mainwaring too, so very uncommon!"

"Yes, well, Arthur Mainwaring's father, Charles Mainwaring, a most talented, amiable man, married when quite young in life, the only daughter of a Mr. Bradshaw, the vicar of the parish. She was a very beautiful young creature, and I believe, worthy of him in every respect. They lived most happily together, and a year or two after their marriage, Mrs. Mainwaring gave birth to two boys—twins. One was the Arthur, whose portrait you have just seen, the other was named Edgar, and very much resembled him in feature, so much so, that, as boys, it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Yet, as they grew older, they showed a marked difference as to disposition; indeed, their characters were as

unlike as is possible to be. Arthur, though a manly, spirited boy, was most gentle and affectionate, indeed, excepting on points where he considered it right to remain firm; he was particularly yielding to those he loved. I really have never seen a more truly, unselfish character than his, always ready to give up anything of his own (however prized), if it could, in any way, benefit, or contribute to the gratification of others. Edgar, on the contrary, was passionate, and impetuous to the last degree, gave way to storms of rage and passion, if any dared to dispute, or cross his will. Though so totally dissimilar in disposition, the two boys were warmly attached to each other, indeed, people used to notice and admire the affection which existed between them. They were almost always together, and Edgar, though so violent to everyone else, rarely gave way to his evil temper in his intercourse with his brother.

"Perhaps this was partly owing to Arthur's gentle forbearance, but at all events up to the

time when the sad events occurred which I am going to relate, the two brothers lived together in the greatest harmony. They were about nineteen years of age when their father was suddenly taken ill of a low fever, of which he died, after some weeks' lingering illness, leaving a considerable fortune to his wife and children. Mrs. Mainwaring suffered severely from the shock of her husband's death; indeed the physician said her health was in so precarious a state, that the greatest care must be taken not to excite or alarm her in future, as any serious agitation would inevitably cause her death. She had already ruptured a bloodvessel, and if alarmed or agitated would be very likely to break another. Nothing could exceed Arthur's devoted, tender care of his mother; indeed even Edgar, in his rough way, did all in his power to contribute to her comfort. So things went on for about a year, at the end of which time a young orphan cousin came to reside with them. Rose Mainwaring was, from the ac-

counts I have always heard of her, extremely beautiful, and at the time she came to reside with her aunt was about seventeen. From the first moment that he saw her, the young impetuous Edgar devoted his whole attention to gain his cousin's affections. Arthur, on the contrary, seeing how deeply and ardently his brother loved her, held rather aloof, and left the two almost entirely to themselves. He has since told me that had not Edgar loved her, he should never have regarded her in any other light than as a dear sister. Rose was not suited in any way for Arthur, yet, strange fatality, she loved him. Edgar, who would have willingly given anything, done anything to win her love, Edgar was nothing to her, Arthur everything. It was not long before Edgar noticed Rose's decided preference for his brother, and then for the first time came the bitter feeling, the almost hatred with which he regarded him. Considering it almost impossible for any one to live in constant intercourse with his cousin without

loving her even as he did, he fancied Arthur had secretly tried to win her affections and had succeeded. He grew morose and gloomy, scarcely ever speaking to his brother, or when he did, hinted at base meanness, underhand dealings, &c. Arthur, little dreaming of Edgar's unjust suspicions, and deeply hurt at his coldness and cutting sarcasm, asked him one day for a few minutes' private conversation, and then tenderly enquired the reason of his strange conduct. Edgar, incensed to the last degree at what he thought his brother's hypocrisy and deceit, gave way to a violent fit of passion, heaping the most opprobrious epithets on Arthur, and accusing him of having purposely and knowingly supplanted him in his cousin's affections. In vain Arthur assured him of his entire innocence of any such base attempt to destroy his happiness. Edgar was too enraged to listen to aught of reason or remonstrance, and at last, thoroughly beside himself with passion, he raised his arm, and with his clenched fist

struck his brother—that brother he had once so fondly loved. I have ever since shuddered whenever I have heard of people giving way to ungovernable fits of passion. How often do they then commit actions, that cast a shadow a blight over their whole future lives!"

Mrs. Newham paused, and Mary, who had listened with deep interest, gave another look at the little portrait she still held in her hand.

"Oh," she said, "how could Edgar behave so to him, so good and amiable?"

"My dear, like too many others, he did not pause to think or consider; he felt at that moment to hate his brother, who had (though unknowingly) won the love he would have almost died to gain. At the first blow from Edgar's hand, Arthur turned deadly pale, and staggered towards a seat. 'Edgar, you misjudge me cruelly;' he said, falteringly. 'Ah, coward, hypocrite, so you dread my vengeance, you shall feel that my arm can deal heavier blows than that.' So saying, his features dis-

torted with rage, Edgar sprang like a tiger at his brother, who tried in vain to ward off the shower of blows inflicted by his unrelenting hand. The unequal struggle lasted but a minute. Arthur's foot slipped, and he fell. You noticed perhaps that his arm was in a sling. As he fell, it bent under him and broke."

"O!" exclaimed Mary, "how shocking, how terrible, he so innocent!"

"Yes, it was indeed shocking, but the worst was yet to come. Arthur, with a murmured 'Oh! my brother, oh! Edgar,' became insensible; the sudden, intense pain of his broken arm caused faintness. At that moment, as Edgar was gazing in stupified horror on his brother's lifeless form, the door was thrown open and Mrs. Mainwaring, attracted doubtless by the sound of the violent struggle which had just taken place, entered the room. At the sight of Edgar, whose hand was still raised and clenched, and whose horrified gaze was bent, as if fascinated, on the pale countenance

of his brother; at the sight of him, and of her fondly loved Arthur prostrate, lifeless on the ground before him, Mrs. Mainwaring gave a piercing cry, gasped for breath, and in another instant a deep crimson stream issued from her mouth, completely bathing her with blood. Edgar rushed to the bell, and rang one loud continued alarum for help. The terrified servants hastened into the room. 'Look!' said he, pointing to his mother and brother, 'I have killed them both, wretch that I am, they who so loved me, I have rewarded thus—my God have mercy upon me!' and striking his forehead with his clenched hand, he rushed from the room."

"O! wretched, wretched Edgar!" murmured Mary, deeply moved by the sad recital.

"Wretched indeed! He had killed his mother. She lived but a few hours—her last words were messages of love and forgiveness to her unhappy son. After his mother's death Arthur devoted his whole energies to the pursuit of Edgar, that twin brother, whom,

in spite of all his errors, his heart so yearned to see again, to tell him of his mother's dying messages of love and pardon, and to assure him of his own unabated affection and pity. But all his efforts to discover the place of his retreat proved useless. An old man in the village said that as he was hewing timber in the forest, the day after Mrs. Mainwaring's death, Mr. Edgar had suddenly appeared, and asked him if he knew aught of his mother and brother. He told him that the latter was improving, though still suffering much from his broken arm, but that his mother was dead. The old man said he never saw an expression of greater anguish on anyone's countenance than on that of Edgar, when he heard of his mother's death. One moment he leant against a tree as if for support, then rushed wildly from the spot, and has never been seen or heard of since. Arthur determined on leaving England, the sad scene of his trouble, so after spending a few days with us in strict retirement, he departed for Italy, where he now

generally resides, excepting when business, or a wish to see old friends, occasions a short visit to England. He has become a merchant, and I believe his fortune is now immense. It was during his stay here, before leaving England, that that portrait was taken at our urgent request. It is very like, and I prize it much, for it recalls him to my mind just as he looked at that time now four years ago."

"So long as that!" exclaimed Mary.

"Yes, it is just about four years since his mother's death, but we have seen him since. He talks of ultimately returning to England, and residing near us, but I do not think he will be able to leave Naples for another year or two, on account of his business."

Mary gazed thoughtfully at the portrait. She understood now why the face was so overshadowed with melancholy. He had indeed gone through enough at that time to take all light-heartedness away.

"And the young lady, Rose I think you

called her, what is become of her?" she asked after a short pause.

"She is long since married, and when last I heard of her, had two children, a boy and a girl. She was dreadfully shocked at the time by all that occurred, but she was a gay, rather frivolous girl of fashion like many others, and soon forgot the misery she had—though unintentionally—been the cause of, in a round of gaiety and amusements. Arthur she saw plainly had never returned her love, and was not likely to do so now after all that had passed, so she consoled herself by marrying a Colonel Lytton, who, from what I hear, seems a very nice man, and very fond of her."

"Well, it is a good thing for her that she can so easily forget. If I had brought such misery into a family, I do not think I could ever be quite happy again," said Mary thoughtfully.

"Ah! my dear, you are very different in character and disposition from Rose Mainwaring; but really you look so sad over this

story of mine, I am afraid your mamma will be giving me a scolding for telling you such things, and making you so melancholy."

"Never mind me, Mrs. Newham; I have been so interested. O! how I wish Edgar could be found, and that the brothers might be together again."

"Yes, indeed, I do too, and am always hoping to hear some news about him. Though never so amiable as Arthur, he had many good points about him. It was that terrible temper which so completely marred everything that was good and beautiful in his character. But dear Arthur! I do hope you will see and know him some day, I am sure you and he would get on so well together. There, we must not talk any longer, for I see your mamma has finished her game of draughts, and is looking towards us as if she wondered how long we were going to remain in this corner chatting all by ourselves. I hope you won't have dreadful dreams of Arthur and Edgar," she added laughingly, as they rose

from their seats and proceeded to rejoin the others.

If Mary did not dream, she often thought of those twin brothers, thus sadly separated, each wandering apart from the other loved one, desolate and alone. Alas! for the consequences of that one ungoverned fit of passion! Edgar, the miserable Edgar, what had become of him, an alien from his home and friends? And Arthur, that sweet, melancholy face rose up continually before her eyes, and in her prayers that night for her own dear ones, the names of those two brothers rose involuntarily to her lips, and she prayed that they might still be happy, yet live once more to be united.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive.

THE church clock had just struck three, and all seemed quiet and at rest in the town of Hatfield. The steady tread of a solitary policeman now and then traversing the deserted streets, alone broke the silence which reigned around. All seemed at rest, did I say? No, not quite all, for a light might be seen at one of the upper rooms of the house of Mr. Morrice, and a shadow passing continually to and fro, showed that the occupant of that room, whoever he might be, was not yet retired to rest. We have already introduced ourselves

into the doctor's little parlour; we will now take a peep into this chamber also, and see by whom it was still occupied at this late hour, when all the rest of the household were asleep. The room is a comfortably furnished, tolerably sized bedroom. A bright fire was still burning in the grate. Strange at such an hour as that, stranger still that the occupant of the apartment, Mr. Morrice, was pacing up and down the room, apparently in great agitation and distress of mind. Some papers lay spread out on a little table placed in front of the fire, and now and then he paused to examine them with minute attention, then dashed them from him, as if the very touch of them were poison. At last, ceasing his hurried walk, he seated himself in the arm chair by the fire, and remained long perfectly motionless, absorbed in thought. "I cannot, I cannot," at last he murmured. "'If ever my children should live to want it, and you are in the position, then'"—he paused, and with knitted brows, gazed earnestly at one of the letters

spread out before him, "yes; well is it true that they want it so much? That girl obliged to earn her bread by teaching, so they say, and that they are very much put about. Put about. What I have been all my life till now, and just now when I am saving every hardly earned penny towards a comfortable competence in my old age, this old debt stares me in the face demanding payment. No, it can't be; £500 out of my little, it can't be. Nobody knows, nobody shall know!"

He caught up the letter near him in a sudden frenzy, but the words "My dear Clifton," caught his eye, and again his hand was arrested. He paused once more, and spreading the letter out before him, read and re-read its contents. They were as follows:

"My Dear Clifton,

"Pray do not worry yourself about the payment of that little loan. It is as nothing to me, I can assure you; nobody besides ourselves knows aught of the matter. You

quite hurt me, my dear fellow, by sending that stupid I.O.U. affair, as if I could not trust to your honor! I send it back, for I won't have any such nonsense as that between old friends. I am not in the least in want of money, and would not have you distress yourself to pay me for the world. The report which reached you, that I was about to marry Miss Dean is quite true; she is a very pretty, amiable girl, and I hope I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to her some day. My marriage will take place some time in May. Write and let me know your exact whereabouts a little before then, that I may tell you the day, for, of course, you must be one of the party, old fellow. You ask me how my poor little shaver out in America is getting on? I know nothing fresh about him since last I wrote; he was all right then you know. Excuse this horrid scrawl, but I'm in a deuce of a hurry, preparing to go to a dinner-party at the Dean's. I wrote this straight off in a fit of indignation and annoyance at

your letter and the I.O.U. Years hence if ever my children live to want it, and you are in a position, then you can remember that U.O. me £500; else do not think any more about it.

"Your faithful old chum,

"HERBERT GRAHAM."

After reading this letter through for the third time, Mr. Morrice stretched out his hand, and swept the remaining little pile of letters towards him. They were all in the same handwriting, and bore the signature, "Herbert Graham." He clutched them convulsively for a moment, then with a sudden, violent effort, and turning his head away as if he could not bear the sight, he threw the whole collection into the blazing fire. There was a bright glare for a minute or two, a noise as of fast consuming paper, and then all was still as before. He turned his head, and wiping the damp moisture from his brow, gazed fearfully about the room. "Oh! if he sees," he mur-

mured, "what does he think? His fatherless children obliged to earn their bread, and I, I —oh! but how could I spare it, when I have but £2,000 saved in all! He resumed his hurried pacing up and down the room, now and then incoherently speaking his thoughts aloud, "You are a fool, Morrice Clifton," he at length exclaimed passionately; "who is to be the wiser for all this? No one." No one! Was there indeed no eye upon him, marking that act of dishonesty and wrong? He remembered not that One who is "a father to the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widow;" he thought not of the arm all powerful to avenge and punish. Alas! no; his thoughts were only of man, of the world, and the things of the world. For these he bartered the best feelings of his heart. His generous-hearted friend had indeed been deceived when he said he could trust implicitly to his honor.

Where was that honor now? Better is it not to believe too confidently in any friend,

however honest and true he may appear, lest we should be deceived.

Herbert Graham had first made the acquaintance of Morrice Clifton (for such was his real name) at College, and ever ready to help others, generous and open-hearted to a fault, on his friend coming to him a short time after in great trouble, telling him he should lose all hope of getting a good practice if he had not the sum of £500 at once to aid him in his difficulties, Herbert, to whom it seemed a mere trifle out of his then handsome fortune, immediately said he should be delighted to oblige him, and accordingly gave a cheque on his banker for the amount. Time passed on, and Morrice Clifton was not in a much better position than he had been before. He expended the whole of his income in keeping up an appearance equal to that of the other medical men of the town where he resided, fearful that they would otherwise be considered more of, and preferred before him.

But not being particularly clever in his profession, and the neighbourhood being already overrun with medical practitioners, he made but a scanty income of a hundred or two yearly, in spite of all his efforts.

Soon after lending his friend the money, Herbert lost his wife, and was so absorbed in arranging his own affairs, that he saw very little of Clifton; indeed, two years passed away, an occasional letter being the only communication between them. About a month or two before his second marriage, however, he received a long letter from him, saying how sorry he was not to be able to return the money he had so kindly lent him as yet, on account of his many pecuniary embarrassments; but adding, he hoped to return a part shortly, when his practice improved. In a fit of generosity and pity for his friend, Herbert wrote back the answer, which we have already laid before the reader.

Now many men of the world would laugh at the bare idea of such unparalleled generosity,

and consider him a downright fool for acting thus; but they must remember that Herbert had, from his boyhood, been accustomed to act upon the impulse of the moment, and seldom considered what might be the future consequence of such conduct. He would not have lent such a sum to every one without proper security, but to Morrice Clifton, his old College friend, it was quite a different affair. He felt sure that when Clifton could pay him he would, and if it never laid in his power to do so, why, he should think no more of it; the loss of the money would not ruin him, but it would his friend.

So thought Herbert at that time, little dreaming that those last words of his letter, written almost in jest, would ever come true, and that his children would indeed live to want the sum he now thought so lightly of.

But as it was, his eyes were soon opened to his friend's baseness and dishonesty, for on writing again shortly before his marriage, he received no answer, and his letter was re-

turned unopened. Clifton had quitted the place secretly, leaving his numerous creditors to do as they could. None could discover the place of his retreat, and the search was at length given up in despair, as it was generally supposed he had gone abroad. Herbert was greatly disgusted and annoyed at his friend's treachery and deceit, but his mind was at the time so occupied with other things, that the whole affair soon faded from his recollection, and after the lapse of some years he forgot such a person as Morrice Clifton had ever existed. But his former friend was nearer than he imagined. After residing some years in a remote country town in the north of England, under the name of Clifton Morrice, instead of Morrice Clifton, he had at length returned to the neighbourhood of London, and was then residing in the town of Hatfield, where he hoped to remain unnoticed and unrecognized by any of his former acquaintance.

He got on better here than he had ever done before in his life. His practice increased, till

it at last averaged from £500 to £600 a year. Out of this income he saved as much as he could possibly spare, not with a view of paying any of his former debts, but that he might have sufficient to live in ease and comfort in his old age. At the time when our story commenced he had above £2,000 in the bank. This proceeding would have been perfectly right and praiseworthy under any other circumstances, but he should have sacrificed the idea of his own comfort and indulgence, at all events for a time, that he might conscientiously discharge those debts which he had formerly so rashly incurred. But he was, as we have seen, essentially worldly, dishonourable, and selfish. So far he had prospered, but was not doomed long to remain in perfect security. By a most strange coincidence he had, some years after he had taken up his abode at Hatfield, read the death of a Mr. Graham in the *Times*. The christian name was not exactly the same, being Halton instead of Herbert, but the age agreed with that

of his former friend, and he immediately concluded that they had mistaken the name, and printed Halton for Herbert. Partly, no doubt, through his intense wish that it might be the same, did he come at last to believe that it was so. Therefore, when he heard of the arrival of a family of the name of Graham at St. Albans, it caused him no uneasiness, as he did not for one moment imagine that it would have anything to do with him or his affairs. Great was his astonishment on recognizing in the altered countenance of the dying man he was suddenly called upon to attend, the very Herbert Graham he had so shamefully deceived. His fears of being discovered and disgraced were, as we have seen, relieved by Mr. Graham's sudden death, but the uneasy consciousness of guilt caused him studiously to avoid any more intercourse with the family than he could possibly help. He was constantly tormented by hearing their names mentioned, amongst those families whom he attended at St. Albans, and their

altered position commented and remarked upon in pitying terms. His conscience spoke loudly at this time, and his better nature urged him honorably to acknowledge and repay his debt, and thereby assist, in no slight degree, the children of his departed friend. Alas! he resisted the promptings of his better self; he stifled that voice which whispered him to return to the paths of rectitude and peace.

Too many are there like Morrice Clifton, who give up all for gold. Their peace of mind, honour, and self-respect are sacrificed, that they may gain that, which often, when obtained, proves but vanity and vexation of spirit. Could they but foresee the consequences, even in this world, of thus blindly yielding up everything for the pursuit of riches, they would perhaps act otherwise. Years after, what would not Morrice Clifton have given, to be enabled to make up for that base act of dishonest fraud!

"How differently I would have acted, had

I but my life over again!" is often the agonized cry of some repentant sinner. But it is then too late; they cannot recall the past; too often also is it impossible then to make reparation to others for the misery they have caused them.

Mary Graham little thought that the sum for obtaining the darling wish of her heart (Archie's commission) was in reality due to them, by rights theirs; no, she knew it not. All things were working together to their appointed end and purpose; directed and overruled by that wise Hand, which "ordereth all things well."

CHAPTER IX.

From the barren waste of afterlife,
The weariness, the worldliness, the strife,
The soul looks o'er the desert of its way,
To the green gardens of its early day.

F. BUTLER.

IT was a dark, dreary day, towards the end of January. The snow was falling fast, and a cutting north-east wind whistled drearily round the corner where the Grahams resided, causing poor Mary to shiver involuntarily at the thought of leaving their comfortable fire-side, and braving such weather as that.

"Really, so near nine, mamma," she said, with a sigh, rising reluctantly from her seat, "then I must be going. Oh, dear; how I wish

I could get rid of this cold!" as a violent fit of coughing seized her as she was leaving the room.

"You will never get rid of it, Mary, whilst you are exposed continually to such weather as this. Why, only the other day, you came home completely drenched, wet through. How is it possible, child, for you to get rid of your cough?"

"Well, mamma," said Mary, mournfully, pausing at the door to hear the conclusion of Mrs. Graham's comforting speech, "How can I help it? You know I must go."

"Yes, well I know, and know too, that if this goes on, your health will fail at last. I used to be able to do things that I can't now. I am sure, if I am so worried, and this weather continues, I shan't last out this winter." And Mrs. Graham ended as usual by expatiating on the never ending topic, namely, her own ailments and sufferings. Mary knew, if she stopped till that subject was exhausted, she might wait on all day, so gently closing the

door, she proceeded sadly to ascend the stairs, and prepare for her dreary walk.

O those every day trials, those daily miseries, how hard they seemed to bear! The whole day spent in teaching children, often wayward and tiresome to the last degree, the miserable walk home, through rain or snow, then on her return to have to listen to the fretful murmuring and complaining of Mrs. Graham during the long, dull evenings. She did indeed require all her fortitude to bear her trials with patience! Sometimes her heart sank within her at the prospect of long, dreary years, spent in the same way, and she felt inclined to murmur and rebel at the hardness of her lot. Why should she have so different a fate to others, whose hearts were light and free from care, who had everything they could wish for to make them happy? But she checked her repining thoughts, for were there not many too, who, like her, had to toil for their daily bread without a hope of any chance, or release from labour, completely friendless and desti-

tute, with no loving friend to cheer them on their lone path, or to reward them with sweet words of consolation and encouragement. Yes, there were many such, she knew, and she felt how thankful she ought to be for the blessings still left her. Often when tempted to despair, a letter from Ernest, full of tender sympathy and advice, cheered her sinking heart, and gave her fresh energy to perform her duties. On this morning, however, she felt unusually dispirited and depressed. Her mother's foreboding remarks found a responsive echo in her own breast. She was not strong, and her cough, which she had almost entirely lost during that happy month's relaxation from teaching at Christmas, had now returned with redoubled violence, and though she seldom complained, she felt far from well, very different to what she had done the year before, when full of health and spirits, all things had seemed so bright, and she had looked forward to the future, with the sanguine, happy heart of one who knew no care, or sorrow. It was with a

mind filled with anxious thoughts and a heavy heart, that she took her way along the dreary streets, struggling with the sharp, cutting wind, and trying, almost in vain, to shield herself from the storm of snow and sleet. Arrived at the place of her destination, she was preparing to give her customary ring at the bell, when the door was opened by Mr. Anderson himself, who was just going out.

"How do you do, Miss Graham, quite well, eh?"

"I have a very bad cold just now," said Mary, "which I am afraid this sharp wind does not much improve. However, I hope it will soon be better."

"Cold wind! Why, dear me, you don't mean to say you think so much of a little cold. The walk will do you good."

Mary made no remark, but ascended the stairs to the room, where her little pupils awaited her.

"Is it not a dreadful day, Miss Graham?" said the youngest, a little boy about seven

years old, springing forward to meet her. "Papa says, neither mamma nor we are to go out to-day; it is scarcely fit for a dog to be out in such a cutting wind as this, he says, and would be sure to give us cold. You have a very bad cough, Miss Graham, why did you not stay at home?"

"Because I am obliged to come and teach you," she answered, thinking in her own mind the immense difference Mr. Anderson made between his wife and children and a poor governess. Ah! she too had once known what it was to be tenderly cared for and cherished, and her heart swelled, and the hot tears rose to her eyes as she thought of that dear protector, now lying cold and still, whose chief thought had been to make his children happy, and shield them from every harm.

"Try and be good children to-day," she said, wearily, pressing her hands to her hot brow; "I do not feel at all well."

They were a little less troublesome for a time, but were too thoughtless and spoiled to

remain long quiet and good. Thus the morning was passed pretty much as usual, in incessant urging on the part of Mary to be more attentive to their lessons, and on theirs in listless indolence and inattention, varied by occasional out-bursts of passion and naughtiness.

Here we will pause a moment, to make some remarks on the subject of governesses and their pupils. Too often half the misery of a teacher's life originates in the mismanagement of parents, who, instead of uniting with them to correct the faults in their children's character and disposition, blindly excuse and humour them, thus rendering their correction and improvement an almost impossible task. How greatly are they to blame, and what a foolish course is theirs! Too often in after years are they made bitterly to feel and repent of their weak indulgence. When once a child discovers that the threat of punishment from the teacher is not carried out, which it is impossible to be without the parent's sanction or consent, all fear of the consequences of doing wrong is

gone, and henceforth he openly resists and defies all attempts to control or guidance. Such was the case with Mrs. Anderson's children. When first Mary had undertaken their instruction, she had done her utmost to improve them in every way that laid in her power, but soon found it a hopeless, thankless task. Her efforts were, indeed, worse than useless, for however badly they behaved, their mamma always excused their conduct with a—"Poor children, they are disinclined for lessons this morning, they do not mean any harm," or "You must not be too hard upon Franky, Miss Graham, 'boys will be boys,' you know." Therefore, if she set them a task as punishment for some misdemeanor, she would, perhaps hear the following excuse on the next day:—"Mamma took me out to spend the afternoon with grandpapa, so she says you must excuse my double lesson to-day, Miss Graham," and frequently, what annoyed and vexed her even more, she would hear that they had actually been compensated for the

extra trouble they had had as a punishment, by receiving a reward. "I do not care a bit about my double lesson," said little Franky one day, exultingly, to Mary, after her threatening him with one if he continued to be so naughty; "I do not care a bit about it, for mamma always gives me a penny for learning it."

How different would it be if, in unison with those who instruct their children, parents did their utmost to eradicate those evil weeds, whose luxuriant growth checks the good in their hearts. Any inconsistency in those who have the charge of them is quickly perceived and taken advantage of, therefore great care ought to be taken, not by word or look to encourage them in wrong. Many dispositions are irrevocably spoiled and ruined by injudicious treatment. A child petted and caressed one day, is perhaps neglected and scolded another, according to the caprice and humour of the moment, and the same fault overlooked and passed over with but slight comment and re-

proof at one time, is violently censured at another, till at last the young offender's ideas of right and wrong become inextricably confused and uncertain.

What a fearful idea that these thoughtless ones will have to give an account of the tender nurslings entrusted to their care! Jewels are they, precious gems lent us for awhile, to be one day returned to Him who gave them. Oh! let us so bring them up in the right way, guide their footsteps aright, that they may indeed be jewels in our crown of glory; may be returned to their Creator stones polished and garnished, worthy of the costly setting prepared for them.

Mary felt deeply the responsibility of her situation as governess, and earnestly endeavoured faithfully to fulfil her duties, not only in regard to the education of the head, but also of the heart. Those endeavours, though (as we have seen), rendered almost entirely fruitless in the one family by the thoughtless indulgence of their mother, met with ready

coercion and sympathy from Mrs. Newham, who supported her young friend's authority in all things, and felt deeply grateful to her for her unflinching, unwearied efforts for the improvement of her young charge.

Loved and respected by her children and servants, she was all that a christian wife and mother ought to be. Would that there were more such wives and mothers, how greatly would the morals and manners of our English population be improved! Such women, though not famous for any wonderful deed of glory, or renowned on account of some one particular feat of heroism, are indeed (though quietly, unobtrusively so) shining lights, lights which burn not, perhaps with the glare, which the approbation of the world entails on its favored ones, but steadily, constantly, which fade not away, but continue to cast their mild beams around, gladdening all that come within their influence.

Though always wearied before-hand by the arduous duties of the morning, it was with

very different feelings Mary prepared to depart to her afternoon engagement at Mrs. Newham's. She knew the kind greeting which awaited her, the gentle care and consideration which made up, in a great measure, for the long two hours spent in teaching; that loving, almost sister-like attention to her comfort, cheered her heart and rendered her duties comparatively light. But she was certainly doomed on this day to feel to the full the bitterness of her lot, for on her way home, as she was thinking, with pleasure, of the conversation she had just had with Mrs. Newham respecting Archie, in which that lady had praised him highly, saying she had seldom seen a boy she liked so much, that she was sure he would grow up to be a great comfort to them all; commendations which had filled Mary's heart with pride and delight, for did not Archie deserve them?

Absorbed thus in her own thoughts, she scarcely heard the rattling of carriage wheels, till a sudden exclamation of "Take care, Miss.

you'll be run over," caused her to start and turn hastily round. Poor girl! The sight which met her eyes caused such a sudden sick revulsion of feeling, that it was with great difficulty she could so far command herself as to keep steadily on her way, appearing not to have seen or noticed what had, in reality, struck so deeply to her heart. Edward Martin was one of the occupants of the carriage. He was too occupied with one of his companions to notice Mary's startled look of recognition. That companion, a young lady in the first bloom of youth, was listening with downcast, blushing face to the words which he addressed to her. Ah! Mary needed not to hear those words of insinuating flattery; too well she knew their purport. Once she, too, had listened and believed with fond credulity, once he had gazed even as tenderly and admiringly into her face. And now? Her heart throbbed almost to bursting as she thought of the change which had taken place in their relative positions. Another now oc

cupied the place which had once been hers, another's image reigned in that heart, which she had thought hers, and hers only. But it was a fickle, selfish heart; she wished no longer to be mistress of the poor measure of affection it could offer, yet—ah! yet bitter still was the pang which the sight of him occasioned, who had once possessed her entire affection and confidence, bitter still the thought that he could indeed so easily forget, and transfer his attentions to another. Yet, though the anguish of that moment was hard to bear, it was good for Mary to have thus seen her former lover. It served to rend even more effectually the ties which had once bound them. No more lingering thoughts of him would now disturb her peace, no more vague, undefined hopes that he would yet prove worthy of her love, and return to ask her forgiveness for the sorrow he had caused her. No—it was all over now—he was, or would shortly be, another's; he thought not, cared not what became of her. Should she then

still waste her thoughts on him? Pride whispered never, and after the first shock of seeing him was past, she felt thankful for the entire change in her feelings. Gone was every lingering spark of regret, and when a short time after, Mrs. Anderson informed her with almost malicious triumph, that her former "beau, Edward Martin, was going to be married in a day or two to a very beautiful, rich young lady," she was disappointed if she had hoped to see Mary evince any emotion, for she answered coldly, calmly:

"Oh! indeed, that is news!" And that placid exterior was not assumed. She felt no longer as she had once felt; nought of the love which had formerly so engrossed her young heart, now remained, and had she known that she need only say one little word to bring him again to her feet in contrition for the past, that word would have remained unsaid, and she would have scorned the idea of receiving him again after what had passed. The Edward she had so loved did not exist;

the Edward as he had shown himself to be, she utterly despised. Henceforth all her love, all her hope would be centred in that dear home, where there was indeed true, unalterable affection; where the changeless heart turned only the more fondly to its loved ones, when sorrow cast its shadow o'er them, where nought could alienate or estrange the love which united and bound them together.

CHAPTER X.

Peace to our foes, and love to all,
How hardly man this lesson learns,
To smile, and bless the hand that spurns;
To see the blow, and feel the pain,
But render only love again.

"COWARD! So you won't fight it out like a man; you are afraid—afraid!" the last word was dwelt on with scornful emphasis. "Now I should think you have had enough of interfering with me, and will leave me alone for the future, to do as I like in matters that don't concern you."

So saying, the speaker, a tall stripling about fifteen, marched away, leaving Archie, to

whom this sneering speech had been addressed, standing with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes surrounded by a little group of boys of different ages and sizes, collected in the play-ground adjoining the house of Mr. Fanshawe.

"Why, Graham," said one, "what on earth is come over you, that you didn't give it him well, and make him swallow his big words, instead of actually refusing to fight him? He'll be bullying Armstrong worse than ever now, for all you've tried to prevent it."

"That he never shall, whilst I am by," answered Archie, with compressed lips and knitted brows, "never! I have given my reasons for not fighting it out, and now you may all think what you please. I have often enough proved that I am no coward, when Ingram has cut rather a sorry figure, and shown pretty plainly that he had not much real courage."

"That he has!" exclaimed one of the lesser boys enthusiastically; "why, when we were

all overtaken one day in old Dane's nut-field, and he threatened us with a good horsewhipping, Graham stood by us and bore all the blame, whilst Ingram, who had led us into the scrape, cut off, and left us in the lurch to do as we could."

"Oh! yes—*we* know Graham is no coward," said the other rather hesitatingly, as if fearful of giving offence, "yet I think it is a great pity to give Ingram's set such a good opportunity to crow over us, and throw it continually in our faces that he refused to fight. And after all, talking about conscience, not thinking it right to fight, and all that, any chap can do that you know, just to get out of it, and so they'll say, and—"

He was interrupted by Archie, who said rather haughtily:

"I have said you might think as you pleased. You had better all turn upon me, and go over to Ingram. It is nothing to me."

So saying, he turned away, and proceeded towards the house.

One of the group, a little fellow about eight years old, with his eyes red from recent weeping, hastened after him, and putting his hand lovingly into his, accompanied him to the door. The rest remained stationary, still occupied in discussing the merits and demerits of those whose quarrel had occasioned such excitement in their little schoolboy world.

Archie had, for some time past, been at variance with James Ingram, a most tyrannical young bully, who was continually ill-using and domineering over the lesser boys. Now, too, that Archie was in the capacity of tutor to the younger ones, he naturally did all he could to shield and protect them from such treatment; therefore a continual warfare ensued between the two boys, each contending with all his might for the mastery, and each having an almost equal number of partizans and upholders in the school.

On the day in question, Archie's youngest and favorite pupil, Horace Armstrong, had been most shamefully used by James Ingram.

After having bullied him into exchanging a cricket ball, which the poor little fellow valued highly, for some worthless trash of his own, he had finally given him but half of what he had originally promised, and then told him to go about his business for he would get no more; and on Horace expostulating, and asking to have his ball returned if he did not mean to give him what he said he would, the heartless young rascal hit him some severe blows on the head, causing the poor child to run weeping to Archie to tell him of the treatment he had received.

Thereupon a terrible quarrel ensued, James Ingram refusing to yield up the ball, and Archie indignantly demanding its restoration. Soon cries of "fight it out—fight it out!" resounded through the play-ground, and Ingram, throwing off his jacket, began pompously to proclaim his willingness to do so. Archie, however, drew back, and declared he would not be led into doing any such thing.

Mr. Fanshawe would be extremely angry with them for setting the rest such a bad example, and disobeying his strict orders never to fight on any consideration; besides he had been taught to believe that it was very sinful and wrong to knock each other about like brute beasts, and he concluded by once more appealing to Ingram to return the ball and save farther altercation. A loud shout of derision from Ingram and his set followed this speech of Archie's, and they forthwith began to call out tauntingly—"Coward! canting hypocrite! mother's darling, &c., &c."

Poor Archie! it was a hard trial to him to be obliged to hear such words without taking immediate vengeance on the offender; his high spirit could ill brook to hear the word "coward" connected with his name; yet though the veins in his temples swelled almost to bursting through the violence of the tumult within, he stood immoveable, thinking, poor boy—"If Mary and Ernest could see me now,

they would see that I too have my trials, my miseries—that I too can bravely bear them for their sakes."

He knew how greatly it would grieve his kind master to hear that he had so far forgotten himself as to disobey his orders, and do the very thing he most disliked. No, let them say what they liked, he never would; and, as we have seen, after telling them his unalterable resolution, he quitted the spot, leaving them to talk over the affair, and decide as to whether he was right or wrong in refusing to fight James Ingram. But whatever their decision might be, whatever their thoughts, Archie had the happy consciousness that he had acted right. He knew that his conduct would be approved by those whose opinion he valued most, as also by a Higher Power, who knew the inmost thoughts of his heart; therefore, though his brow was still clouded, and his face less bright and happy than usual at the thought that his schoolfellows would now consider him a

coward, he entered the class room at the customary hour with his usual free, open demeanour, and was about to take some books out of his desk to prepare for a master, whose lesson he would shortly be called upon to attend, when a suppressed tittering and murmuring round the room caused him hastily to raise his head to see the cause of the disturbance.

The usher, appointed to overlook the boys during the hour allotted for preparation and study, had not yet entered the room, therefore the more unruly, lazy part of the community were gathered together in little groups, whispering and laughing together, and seeming particularly delighted and amused at Archie's startled look of inquiry towards them.

"Hush!" said one, the Dick Marsden, with whom he had so warmly discussed the merits of "High Church," and "Low Church," a short time back; "hush! he'll guess there's something up, if you laugh so. Hold your gab, you little monkey, do, or you shall get something you won't like."

The last words were addressed to little Armstrong, who was using all his efforts to escape from the restraining grasp of one of the bigger boys, exclaiming in piteous tones of entreaty:

"Oh! let me go, pray; I must and will take it off; oh! let me tell him!"

The voice and words immediately attracted Archie's attention, who hastened towards them.

"What do you want to do so very much, Horace; what is it you have to tell me?"

"Oh! Graham," said the little fellow, trying in vain to suppress the rising sobs, which choked his voice, and rendered the words almost inarticulate, "Dick Marsden put a horrid paper on your back whilst you were looking out of the window in the passage. I can't bear to see it, and wanted to take it off, but they would not let me."

Archie put his hand hastily behind him, and tore off a large placard which had been attached to his jacket. He started and turned

pale as the words met his eyes, written in large letters:

"Archibald Graham, Esquire,
Dastardly coward and liar."

For a moment he gazed at the mocking words, then exclaiming passionately:

"It is too much, I cannot, will not bear it." He cleared at one bound the space that devided him from Dick Marsden, and seizing him by the collar with one hand, he held him fast, whilst he administered such a sound boxing of the ears, that his enemy quite staggered under the violence of the blows.

"Bravo, Graham, give it him well, that's right," was now the universal cry of those, who, a short time back, had united to insult him, and condemn his conduct as cowardly. Now he was a hero in their eyes, and they gathered round him with vociferous cheering. Marsden had now put himself on the defensive, and Archie, forgetting all but the indignant sense of his wrongs, was using all his powers to

overcome his adversary. There they stood, their features distorted with rage, aiming vigorous blows at each other's faces, forgetting all, everything, save the gratification of their own hatred and revenge.

What would have been Mary's feelings, could she at that moment have seen her darling Archie, his face bruised and covered with blood, his hand raised in fury against his antagonist ? So rapidly had the whole scene transpired, that scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since Archie's entrance into the schoolroom. The din and tumult had become so great, the boys completely forgetting where they were, or aught, besides the excitement of the moment, that Mr. Fanshawe's step across the lobby was unheard, and it was not till he stood amongst them, and in severe tones commanded the two combatants to desist, that they became at all aware of his presence. At the sound of his master's voice, Archie dropped his upraised hand, and turned towards him. Oh! how different from the Archie, who with

frank, joyous bearing, generally stood before him! His face now smeared and disfigured with blood, one eye partially closed, the other blackened and bruised; his clothes and hair disordered, he stood ashamed to meet his master's eye, now feeling for the first time how wrong it had been so far to forget his good resolutions, and give way to the violence of his passion.

"I am indeed surprised, and grieved to see you thus, Graham," said Mr. Fanshawe, gravely; "I had supposed you incapable of such conduct; however, it seems I had deceived myself in my estimate of you. Go at once to your rooms, both of you, and when you have made yourselves more fit to be seen, come to my study. Meanwhile I shall examine farther into this disgraceful affair."

With what different feelings Archie entered his little bed-room, to those of but half-an-hour ago! Then, he had known he was acting right, and that he deserved the regard and confidence of his master; now how changed

were all things, how bitterly he regretted the events of the last few minutes! Had he but treated their insults with the contempt they deserved, all this misery, this disgrace would have been spared him. He shuddered at the sight of his disfigured countenance in the glass. What would his mother, Ernest, and Mary, think of him, could they see him thus!

"Oh!" murmured he, sorrowfully, "I am bitterly punished—I was too proud of my conquest over myself, too sure that I could resist any temptation! Oh, God forgive me for my presumptuous pride!"

Sinking on his knees by the side of his little bed, he prayed earnestly and humbly for strength to resist the temptations that beset his path. He was startled by a hand being laid gently on his shoulder.

"My, boy," said Mr. Fanshawe, in kindly tones, "I am come to have a little private conversation with you—I am afraid, though, I have disturbed you, but I knocked once, and you did not hear me."

"It does not matter, sir," said Archie, rising, and standing before his master with downcast, averted face. "I was just going to your study as you directed me."

"Well, I thought, on consideration, I should prefer speaking to you alone. I have heard the whole (and I am sure truthful), statement of the origin of this sad affair from little Horace, and although I am very much grieved to think that you should so far have forgotten yourself, as to avenge the insult you had received by such violent means as proceeding to blows, still up to that unfortunate moment, you had acted wisely, and well. I intend giving those, whose shameful conduct occasioned this dispute, a severe reprimand, and I am in hopes that henceforth it will be easier for you to fulfil your duties. And, now, my dear boy, in regard to yourself, let me add a few words of advice. I feel a sincere interest in your welfare, and shall ever continue to do so; not only on your account, but also for his sake whose kindness in many ways, I can never

forget. You have my entire forgiveness for all that has passed, but, Graham, I would have you remember that you have done very wrong in thus giving way to your feelings of revenge and anger. Think, my boy, how greatly it would grieve your mother and sister to hear of this. They never shall from me, I promise you, for I know the pain it would cause them. Yet, let the thoughts of them deter you from such conduct in future, as also of One above, whom you have grieved by acting thus."

"Oh! yes, yes," said the now sobbing boy, "never again will I yield to temptation, never. You are too kind, so easily to forgive."

"Ah! Graham, do not speak so confidently. Make no rash promises. It is this, that I fear most, that you will rely too much on your own powers, make too sure of being able to resist, however tempted. We are all so weak by ourselves, it is impossible for us to stand alone. Remember those words of Göethe which you read the other day:—'*Es irrt der*

Mensch, so lang er strebt;—(allein;) ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange ist sich des rechten Weges wohl beroust.' And now, my boy, I must leave you, Go into my study for the rest of the evening by yourself, and I will send you some tea, and a little book, which I wish you to read. Come into the school-room at prayer-time, but till then, you need not rejoin your companions." And with a kind pat on the shoulder, Mr. Fanshawe quitted the room.

A true Christian, and most conscientious in the performance of his duties, Mr. Fanshawe was, indeed, well qualified in every respect for the instruction of youth. He considered no labour thrown away, if he thought he could in any way benefit, or improve, those entrusted to his care. He watched over Archie with peculiar interest, knowing what anguish it would cause his fond mother and sister, if this younger son did not fulfil the hopes and expectations they had formed. Therfore it was, with almost fatherly solicitude that he warned

and counselled him, and (as in the present instance), seized every opportunity of giving the boy salutary, and lasting impressions of right and wrong. Poor Archie! Humbled and downcast, he betook himself to the study; the smarting pain of his bruised eyes and face, continually reminding him of his sad dereliction and disgrace. The little book sent him by his kind master, entitled "Conquest, and Self Conquest," cheered and interested him. He thought then that he could never forget the bitter lesson he had had, and would henceforth remain steadfast in the path of duty. The bell ringing for prayers, roused him to a sense of his present position. He must enter the school-room, the scene of his misery and degradation, must face all the assembled boys and servants. Terrible. Yet it must be, and hastily taking his way through the long corridors, he finally laid his trembling hand on the handle of the door. It opened. The blaze of light on his poor bruised eyes was so painful,

that he could at first distinguish nothing, and was obliged to screen them with his hand.

"Oh! here you are, Graham, sit down there," said the kind voice of Mr. Fanshawe, and ere he knew well where he was, he found himself in a retired seat at the back of the desk, where the master generally read prayers. He raised his eyes, and the first object they rested on was the swollen, bandaged face of Dick Marsden. Oh! how Archie felt to hate himself for having so disfigured and marred the face of a fellow creature.

The chapter and prayers over, Mr. Fanshawe dismissed the servants, and rapping his ruler on the desk as a signal for attention, began:—

"I am sorry, boys, to see from what has occurred to-day, that your notions concerning true courage and worth should be so utterly wrong and misjudged. The real coward is he, who does aught that is base or mean, who in secret does what he would be ashamed and

afraid to do openly. To this class I am sorry to say you, Ingram," and he turned to the abashed, discomfited young bully, who was seated a few paces from him, " belong. You know full well that you would not dare to illuse any of the little ones in my presence, yet when you think you can do so with impunity, you, as in the case of to-day, torment, and, what no one but a coward would do to a boy so much less than himself, strike them. I give you warning that if I hear of any more such disgraceful doings, the offender shall be severely punished. I will have no such cowardly bullying here. When Graham first refused to fight, he was then the real hero. When he gave way and did so, he acted the coward's part. He was afraid of your sneers and mockery, and therefore did what he knew to be wrong to redeem his character amongst you. Let me hear of no more such doings, my lads, if you value my good opinion. Remember, he is the greatest conqueror who conquers himself, and stands steadfast and

unmoved when tempted to do wrong. Show that noble spirit all of you—do not let me have to reprove you as I have done to-day; rather so act in future that I may be proud, not ashamed, of my pupils." He paused, and added solemnly, "So act that you may have God for your friend, then you will not fear what man can do unto you."

A dead silence reigned in the large school-room, and it was with awed, serious faces that, having received permission to retire, each boy came up to the master to say good night, and to receive the customary shake of the hand. At last all had quitted the school-room, except Archie and Dick Marsden.

"Shake hands now," said Mr. Fanshawe, taking a hand of each, and placing it within that of the other; "forgive all that is past, and be good friends henceforth."

There was real cordiality in the ready willingness which Archie evinced in obeying his master's orders, but Mr. Fanshawe noticed

the almost sullen air with which Dick Marsden extended his hand, and thought, "I shall have trouble with that boy yet," but making no farther remark, he dismissed them both to their respective apartments.

CHAPTER XI.

If thy dream would not forsake thee,
Thou couldst count but endless bliss;
But too soon will sorrow wake thee
From that fairy realm to this.

CARPENTER.

"IF you please ma'm, master bid me ask you whether you were going to drive with him to-day; the carriage has been waiting some minutes."

"Tell Mr. Martin I am not coming. I have already told him so."

The words were spoken pettishly, but the speaker, a young lady, who could not have been much above eighteen, turned away that she might hide her tearful eyes and quivering lips.

"Go, Nancy," she added, even more impatiently than before, as the domestic still hesitated and lingered on the threshold of the door, "go and tell your master what I say, and do not disturb me again on any pretence without I ring. Remember too, I am engaged, to every one who calls—do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'm," and the domestic withdrew.

Her young mistress listened attentively to the sound of her retreating footsteps, then hastily rising from her seat, she turned to the window, and carefully arranging the Venetian blind in a manner that she could see without being seen, gazed earnestly down into the street below. A beautiful little pony phæton was drawn up at the door, and by its side stood Edward Martin, whip in hand, impatiently drawing the thong backwards and forwards through his fingers, and looking from time to time towards the door as if expecting some one.

He had not long to wait. The servant,

who had just quitted the drawing-room, appeared, and delivered her mistress's message. The young lady above bent her head, eagerly listening for the answer it would receive.

"Oh! very well; tell Mrs. Martin it does not matter if she prefers staying at home. It is all one to me."

The words were carelessly, lightly uttered, and he sprang forthwith into his little cabriolet, and catching the reins from the hand of the attendant groom, in a few minutes was out of sight of the straining, eager eyes, which followed his every movement. She turned at last from the window, and throwing herself on to a couch in a corner of the room, buried her head in the cushions, and gave way to a wild hysterical burst of weeping.

"Oh!" she sobbed, "he does not care what I do or say, if I were to die to-morrow, he would not shed a tear; cold heartless thing!" and she wept anew in very pity for herself, as she pictured the whole dreary ceremony of her

funeral, and her hard-hearted, practical husband as chief mourner, following her remains to the grave with stoical indifference.

Poor child! She was but a child in her ignorance and inexperience of the world, and had expected, when she married the apparently devoted, amiable Edward Martin, to find him as a husband all that her young imaginative heart had pictured him to be; but, the first weeks of the honeymoon past, she had found that her hero had many, and not very trifling, faults, amongst which might be numbered a most selfish consideration for himself in all things. Everything must be subservient to his will and caprice, and he was astonished that his young wife should presume to think her comfort or wishes ought not at all times to give way to his.

She had been brought up by an aunt, her mother having died in her infancy, and both her father and Aunt Dora had done their utmost to spoil and pet this, the darling and

only child. Therefore it was not surprising, accustomed as she had been to be consulted and indulged in every way, that she should be bitterly disappointed by discovering that her husband cared so little what she wished or wanted, if it interfered in the least with his plans for amusement and gratification. Doubtless though, she would have willingly yielded up her own wishes to his in every respect; she was too loving and affectionate to do otherwise, had he rewarded her by his whole affection and confidence in return—but Edward Martin did not understand what real love was. He had married a wife as he would undertake any other piece of *business*, with an eye to all the advantages to be obtained therefrom. She must do his taste credit, be pretty and ladylike, such a woman as he should be proud to see seated at the head of his table. So far Mary Graham had possessed every requisite, but then, through the misfortune of her father's sudden death, she was portionless. That would never do. Money he must have at all

costs, and directly he heard of the change which had taken place in their affairs, so immediately did he determine, by some means or other, to break off the engagement. Mary's voluntarily releasing him saved him some trouble, still, in his own mind, he set her down as a great fool, thus contemptuously to throw away the chance she still had of becoming mistress of his house and home. In his estimate of the requisitions necessary in a wife, it did not enter much into his calculations to study the disposition and character of the individual honored by his preference. Unless she appeared shockingly ill-tempered and unmanageable, he had no doubt he should, after a time, be able to so break her into his notions and ideas on things in general, that she would be a passive, humble instrument in his hands to be turned whichever way he chose, and to minister in all things to his sovereign will and pleasure.

Of course girls expected attention and a fuss to be made with them before marriage, but

after! the idea was ridiculous. The husband was then the chief person to be consulted. It never entered his mind that the young, petted Agnes, so idolized in her happy home, would expect more than this, that the love which she felt for him was too great to be satisfied with so poor a return.

No; he imagined she would be contented to bear his name, preside over his household, receive his commands and fulfil them, and as to presuming to lift up her voice, or to show any dissatisfaction in regard to any course he chose to adopt, he should soon let her see that he was not going to have any of that nonsense. To this man the young, warm-hearted Agnes Leslie had united herself for life. Alas! too often in undertaking the most solemn and binding of all engagements, that indissoluble tie, which nought but death should sever, the chief, the all important point is overlooked—Religion. If a man attends church, though it be only once a day, and perhaps only to yawn and stare about him the whole time he is

within its sacred precincts, he is considered all very well as the world goes.

A parent would entrust his child's life-long happiness to the care of such an one, though he would shrink with horror from the idea of giving her to him who never enters a church at all, and openly avows his disregard of all sacred things. Yet which, think ye, is really the more honest of the two? The one refuses to mock God by a vain semblance of religion he does not feel, the other actually dares to insult his Creator by a mere form of worship, in which his heart has no part; goes into his awful presence to murmur forth his praises with heartless indifference, thoughtless, irreverent lips.

Mary had indeed been mercifully preserved from uniting herself to Edward Martin! The wreck of her happiness would have been far greater than with Agnes, for the latter, though an affectionate, warm-hearted girl, had not Mary's deep sense of the all-importance of religion. She could give up at-

tending divine service twice on the Sunday, as she had been before accustomed to do; she would, to please her husband, entertain his guests, and join with them in light conversation and amusements very unbefitting that holy day. All this Agnes could do without feeling how greatly she was in the wrong, so easily to yield to her husband on such serious points as these.

With Mary it would have been very different. When first she became acquainted with Edward Martin, many things in his conversation and way of thinking and speaking on religious subjects had jarred painfully on the chords of right feeling in her own heart. Her father and Ernest had also often asked her whether she thought her lover's principles and ideas on such matters were really such as they ought to be. She had hesitated, faltered, but always ended by saying:

"Oh! dear papa, he is too amiable and good not to see his errors in time. He loves me so much, and always listens so readily to

everything I say. I know it will all be right."

Thus she had deceived herself with dreams for the future, but the veil was mercifully lifted from her eyes in time. She now looked back with horror at the narrow escape she had had of what would have indeed been real wretchedness. It had been a bitter lesson, but she thanked God for her experience. Never again would she allow herself to love one who had not, with her, the same sweet hope and trust. She had seen what were the man of the world's principles of honor and truth, but she knew how far different would have been the conduct of one who feared his God, and acted according to his conscience's high standard of right and wrong. Agnes was deeply disappointed in her husband, because he was not what she had pictured him to be—loving, devoted. She never thought of the difference it would have made if he had been a follower of his loving Saviour; it never struck her that he would have then earnestly striven

to overcome the inherent selfishness of his character, and done his utmost to make her happy. No—" If she had been disappointed in him, she believed all young men were alike; they appeared very well on the outside, but when you came to live with them they were heartless, selfish wretches. She should never trust any one again, and should try to care as little about him as he for her. He could go his way, and she would go hers." These were her thoughts but two months after her marriage, as she wept alone in her elegantly furnished drawing-room, more unhappy than the lowest of her domestics. A bitter altercation had taken place that morning about some mere trifle, in regard to which Edward had, as usual, insisted that she should give up to him. She had disdainfully refused, and they had parted in high wrath; he had shut himself up in one apartment, she in another, and thus amicably had the newly-married pair passed the fore part of the day. In the afternoon, Edward, who was proud of his

young wife's beauty and elegant appearance, and wished to show his new acquisition on every occasion to the admiring eyes of the world, so far condescended as to send to ask her once more whether she was going to drive with him that day. As we have seen, she ungraciously refused, thinking by this means to punish her husband for his unkindness, and bring him, as she hoped, repentant to her side to ask her forgiveness for his unkindness. But he had evinced no sign of wounded feelings, had not, as she had half hoped, half expected he would, dash the whip from his hand, and rush madly upstairs, perhaps even fall on his knees to entreat her pardon for his cruelty. Poor Agnes! Her romantic dream of happiness was indeed over! He could bear thus to depart at variance with her, who had been so miserable, because they had parted in anger.

"Oh! how I wish I was dead!" she exclaimed passionately. "I believe I soon shall be, if he treats me so!" and she thought how

her friends would pity her so young to die, and all through unkindness and neglect.

Oh! Agnes, you do not yet know how much it takes to break a heart. Long years of wearing misery, harder, more bitter trials than you have ever known, fail to snap the chain which binds us to earth. Though often coveted as a blessed release from care and suffering, death does not come. Sorrow may wear the very life and spirit of gladness away, so that nought but a weary, fettered soul remains, yet it seldom kills. Hard though it may appear, poor child, you must live on, bear your burden with the rest of the poor pilgrims here below, your cross of daily disappointments and vexations, in imitation of that Saviour, who bore all his deep woes and sufferings that your soul might be saved to live with him for ever. Is she thinking thus as she now sits quiet, gazing mournfully into the fire, her bright eyes swollen with weeping, her fair ringlets falling in disorder round her sad young face? No! Her heart is full of bitter thoughts. "Surely no

one is so miserable as I," she thinks, "and why should I be chosen out to be so unhappy?" Why? Time will show. That heart, with all its warm affection, its wealth of love, was not meant to be absorbed by the pleasures and vanities of the world. A higher path is marked out, a harder road to travel, which though it seems thorny and difficult for a time, leads to true happiness and peace at last.

CHAPTER XII.

Spring had come, gladdening all around with its sweet, reviving influence. Involuntarily the heart casts off its sad thoughts, and the burden of care and sorrow which had oppressed it. It is almost impossible to watch the sweet opening buds, to listen to the bursts of gladsome melody proceeding from wood, hill, and dale, as the little songsters unite in choral melody, to gaze around, and breathe the soft balmy air, whose gentle breezes fan our cheek, and not feel more cheered and hopeful in looking forward to the future. There is an elasticity, a joyousness in all

around us, that it seems impossible to resist. So thought Mary, as sitting by their little parlour window one beautiful morning in April, she listened to the sweet song of the birds, and watched with delight the many opening flowers in her garden.

"How happy I am this morning," she murmured; "I have not felt so light-hearted for many a day!" and lifting up her own sweet voice in the gladness of her heart, she joined the birds without in their thrilling notes of melody:

"Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee!
Where'er we turn Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

When youthful spring around us breathes,
Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh,
And every flower the summer wreathes,
Is born beneath that kindling eye:
Where'er we turn Thy glories shine,
And all thigns fair and bright are Thine."

Very fair and bright was the young face,

which looked up in such gratitude and love to the blue firmament above her. She repeated softly the words, "Are Thine," then, rising from her seat, opened the door leading into the other room, where sat Mrs. Graham, as usual, in her easy chair before the fire.

"Dear Mamma! everything looks so beautiful and fresh in here; the birds are singing so sweetly, and it is such a soft, mild air today. I am sure it would do you good, instead of harm, if you would let me draw your chair to the window, and sit there for a little while before Aunt comes. You can have a shawl on if you are afraid of catching cold."

"My dear child! how extremely thoughtless your aunt would think me to be sitting there, with my delicate health and tendency to rheumatism. No, indeed, I shall not do any such foolish thing. I am sure I do not know what opinion she would have of my prudence. At my age, too!"

Mary turned away to hide the smile, which she could not suppress.

"Very well; of course you will do as you please, mamma. Do you know I feel so happy to-day; I think something good is going to happen. Perhaps it is the rare pleasure of having a holiday, or it may be something better. Aunt is very well off, and, perhaps, she will offer to help us in some way or other, who knows! Uncle said she was a very nice woman, did he not?"

"Yes, he did, my dear, but I have never seen her. Strange it seems, does it not? but being married on his passage to New Zealand, and their having remained out there ever since, of course it was impossible. I hope she is nice, I'm sure; we cannot judge much from her letter; that is concise enough."

"Yes, but perhaps she was hurried, mamma."

"Perhaps she was, my dear; but just go to the window, for I think I hear something like wheels."

Mary hastened into the other room.

"It is; it is, mamma," she exclaimed, and sprang forward into the passage.

A rather stately, dignified-looking personage was inquiring of Martha whether "this was the abode of Mrs. Graham?"

"Yes; you have come to the right house," said Mary, advancing smilingly to greet her. "I am so glad to see you in England, aunt."

"Are you my niece?" said the lady, speaking in slow, measured tones, and regarding Mary from head to foot, with a curious, inquisitive stare.

"Yes, my name is Mary Graham; but come in, pray, mamma is so anxious to see you."

Her aunt followed her young guide into the adjoining room. Mrs. Graham rose from her seat, and welcomed her visitor with great warmth and some emotion. She was the widow of her only, fondly-loved brother, who had died some years back, in a strange

country, far away from his native land. She looked with interest at the face and form of her, who had been so long the companion of his wanderings. Mrs. Marshall, however, did not seem particularly affected by the meeting, for, after a cold, formal embrace, she turned to look round the room, as if the paramount feeling in regard to her newly-found relatives was that of curiosity, and a desire to inspect themselves, their house and furniture, with the most minute attention.

"I am astonished," she began, pausing a moment, to bend her head in gracious condescension to Mary by way of thanks, for her having brought a chair, "I am astonished to see you living in so very different a way to what I had expected. This house, I should think, is surely too large for you with your limited means. Pray, may I ask do you let a part? I suppose you have taken it with that view."

The hot blood rushed into Mary's face, and suffused her brow and neck with crimson, as

struggling to regain her composure, and speak calmly, she answered:—

"No, indeed, we have not taken it with any such object in view, and I trust we may never be obliged to do so."

"Humph! It is well for you that you are able to speak and act thus. I understood your father died, leaving you almost destitute. What do you do for your living, then?" she asked again, turning to Mary.

"I give lessons, and am able generally to earn sufficient to enable us, with mamma's little income, to get on pretty comfortably."

"And your brothers? Let me see, ah! the eldest, Ernest, is a curate, I believe."

Mary nodded in the affirmative.

"Well, he can do nothing to aid you much at present, I suppose, he has enough to do to get along himself: poor curates generally have; not much chance of preferment either, in these days, without interest or money to back them."

"Ernest will not, I am sure, remain a poor

curate all his life," answered Mary, indignantly. "He is very clever, and I am sure, if God helps the good, which I know he does, Ernest will not remain unrewarded."

"Well, you are very young to advance such decided opinions," said Mrs. Marshall, eyeing her niece from head to foot, with an air of sovereign contempt and pity. "I am afraid you have a great deal of foolish pride, very unbefitting your present position in the world. I am older than you, by many years, and my experience has been unlimited, and I repeat you must not be too sanguine in regard to your brother's prospects. He *may* be clever, but *you* are not a fair judge in regard to his attainments; you only view him with the eyes of affection, others may—but however," seeing Mary about to interrupt her, "he may be clever, and yet remain as he is all his life. I think, in all probability, he will do so; at all events, you ought not to build your hopes upon that. And now about the other boy; what do you mean to do with him?"

Mrs. Graham, who had hitherto remained quiet, perfectly stunned at her sister-in-law's unprecedented rudeness and insolence, now answered:—"Archie is at present at school, and will, I think, remain there for some years to come."

"Indeed! well, I should think you had much better take him away from school and make him earn his own living. A boy of that age could always make himself useful in some way or other, and might earn several shillings a-week, which would be a little help to you all. What is the use of bringing him up with such grand ideas, quite beyond his station."

"He is being educated according to his station," said Mary, proudly. "The son of a gentleman, he will, I hope, fill a gentleman's position in society."

"Well, all this is very well if you will be able to act up to your high notions, and fulfil the plans you have formed in regard to his future welfare. One thing I wish to impress

on both your minds, that, however much I may wish to do so, I shall not be able to assist you with money. My yearly income, which amounts to about £500, is only just sufficient for me to live in the style and comfort to which I have been accustomed all my life, therefore—"

"Do not fear," interrupted Mary, "that we shall ever trouble you with an application for money. If poor papa had been spared to us, we too, should have continued to live in the style and comfort we had been accustomed to all our lives; as it is, we shall, I have no doubt, by God's help, be able to keep our little home together, and get on without the help of those, who dare thus to insult us, just because we are poor. No one knows what a day may bring forth, and many who now trust most securely to their riches, may be deprived of them, as we have been, suddenly and unexpectedly. Though, had we continued in prosperity, I am sure we should never have wounded the feelings of those, whom unfortu-

nate circumstances had reduced to poverty. Dear papa, could he have foreseen, would not—" Her voice faltered, and she burst into tears.

Mrs. Marshall looked at the weeping girl with an expression of dignified astonishment.

"Do you know, I consider you are using very strange language to me, your aunt, who came here with the best, most kindly intentions, to advise and counsel you. In your altered position, you ought never to allow your temper and pride so to get the better of you, that you cannot bear the advice of friends without behaving in that very improper manner. Pray, Mrs. Graham, may I inquire if you encourage your daughter in such absurd exhibitions as these?"

"I have never yet had to reprove my Mary for improper pride," answered Mrs. Graham, coldly, glancing fondly at her child, "and I only wish all the world could see and appreciate her worth. A dear, good daughter and sister she has always been, and done her ut-

most to bear up under the many trials and difficulties of her lot. Such advice as you have given, we certainly shall not follow. I have never been accustomed to be dictated to, and told what I am to do, or say, by anyone, and shall certainly not bear it now. Our little home is our own, and I do not wish to have its peace disturbed and my daughter's feelings wounded, by a comparative stranger."

So saying, the usually quiet, passive Mrs. Graham rose from her seat, her pale cheeks flushed with anger at the sight of Mary's tears, and the heartless manner in which her own brother's wife had treated her.

Mrs. Marshall took the hint, and immediately prepared to depart. "Good-bye, then," she said coldly, touching Mrs. Graham's hand with the tips of her fingers, and after saluting Mary in the same frigid manner, she sailed majestically out of the room, adding, as she crossed the threshold: "I have not been very much gratified with my visit."

Whose fault it was that she was thus disappointed we leave the reader to judge.

o o o o

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Newham, kindly to Mary, that afternoon as she entered the room allotted to herself and pupils, "did your aunt come as you expected?"

"Yes, she came, but I sincerely wish she had kept away," answered Mary, bitterly. "It was a most unpleasant visit. She did all she could to mortify and annoy both mamma and me." And she forthwith proceeded to relate the events of the morning to her sympathising friend.

"Poor child! There don't fret about what relations say or think. I know how they trample upon, and insult, the feelings of their poorer friends. The difference that is made when one has money, and has not! Oh! it is a sad world, Miss Graham, but we must just try and get through it as best we

may, looking forward to the time when all distinction between wealth and poverty will be over. Your aunt's conduct puts me in mind of two young friends of mine, who were also treated most shamefully by their relations. I really think often the greatest trouble and annoyance when one is poor, is rich relations. They seldom do as they ought, and render all the assistance in their power. That is not their way; it would be a good thing if it were. Money they rarely give, but are always ready to interfere and advise, seeming to think that such condescension on their part ought to be acknowledged by profound humility and immediate concordance with any opinion they may think proper to advance. Oh! I have seen enough of it! Never shall I forget how indignant I felt when one of the young ladies I just mentioned, told me of the way in which she and her sister had been treated. That was by an aunt, too—her own father's sister. I will just tell you the whole affair, and then,"

she added, smiling, "you will see that you are not the only one who has had her feelings thus wounded. The two sisters were thrown on the world at an early age; their father, a barrister, dying when only thirty-one, of disease of the heart. They were educated as governesses, and supported themselves and widowed mother by their exertions. I always liked, and felt a particular interest in them,—poor girls, they had so much to bear! They were well connected, their father's relations being of a good family, but a proud, heartless set, and though they were always interfering with the poor Reynolds's, and giving them their advice unasked, they rarely assisted them with money; indeed I do verily believe that had they been told for certain that the whole family would be ruined, and have their prospects irretrievably blighted, if they had not the sum of £20 to relieve their difficulties, they would one and all have refused it. But in regard to the affair I was going to tell you of, an aunt of theirs was

engaged to be married. Of course the two girls were invited to the wedding. They had actually got their dresses ready for the occasion, and were looking forward to what would be a great change in their monotonous life, when a day or two before the marriage, they received a letter from their aunt, informing them that they must curtail their party, and she should therefore be obliged to leave her two nieces out; they must take the "will for the deed." Now, sooner than have thus disappointed those two poor girls, I would have excluded two of the richer, more influential of my guests, so that they might have been present. But she thought otherwise—thought moreover, that they would bear the slight with becoming humility, and think it quite natural that they should be left out, whilst some, with no particular claim on her, but the distinction, which wealth and position gave, filled the place, which ought to have been theirs. Strange and wrong of them, was it not? They did not see it in this light. The

eldest—Myra, a high-spirited, warm-hearted girl, wrote back an indignant reply, telling her aunt, in plain terms, what she thought of her conduct. This unexpected, unheard-of rebellion against their dignity, raised such a tumult of indignation and wrath, such a perfect revolution in the little colony of rich relatives, that poor Myra, had she not known she was in the right, would have been completely overwhelmed by the tempest she had raised. However, she cared not, heeded not, what they said or thought of her, and let matters take their course. I am happy to say she is now in a position far above those who so slighted her, having married a wealthy shipowner, who lives in almost princely style in London. Her mother being now dead, the younger sister resides with them, and the miseries and privations of their earlier life are amply repaid by the happiness of their present lot. And your turn will come again, too, my dear, if you bear the trials God sends you, with meekness and fortitude. Don't look so

downcast, but remember 'There is a silvery lining to every cloud.'"

Mary smiled, though rather sadly, and felt cheered and consoled by her kind friend's encouraging words.

CHAPTER XIII.

O human love! what a load it would be,
Fearful and sad, to cherish thee,
In a world where all things lovely fly,
The delighted gaze of the dreamer's eye;
But for the hope that cannot fade,
For the clear bright faith that knows no shade.

MRS. NEWHAM little thought how soon she herself would require consolation, or what a dark heavy cloud was hanging over their little household. Mary's youngest and favorite pupil, Ellen, was taken suddenly ill. The doctor informed the anxious parents that it was an attack of low fever, which had been hanging about her for some time, and which he was afraid it would be rather difficult to get rid of.

Mrs. Newham was seriously alarmed, for she was a child of particularly delicate constitution, and even a few days' illness seemed to bring down her strength to such an alarming degree, that she trembled when she heard that, in all probability, it would be weeks ere she recovered. The little invalid was the darling and pet of the household. She was a particularly engaging child, affectionate and loving towards all. When her childish faults and naughtiness caused her to be rebuked or punished, she always seemed so sorry and repentant that it was never long before she was forgiven, and received into favour again. She was very fond of her dear "governess," as she called Mary, and now that she was ill, continually asked her mamma to beg "Miss Graham to stop and talk a little while with Ellie."

Mary often did so, indeed, it soon became a considered thing, that she should stay an hour or two every evening, Mrs. Graham willingly foregoing the pleasure of her daughter's society

for the sake of Mrs. Newham, for whom she felt so great a regard and esteem.

A fortnight passed away, and still little Ellie lay on her couch of pain, with strength sadly diminished in spite of all the tender nursing and watchful care which surrounded her. The doctor looked more and more serious as day by day passed on, and still his little patient showed no sign of improvement.

One afternoon when Mary entered the study, her first inquiry being as usual—

"How is Ellie?" Mrs. Newham answered, even more gravely and sorrowfully than usual,

"No better; indeed she is much worse, I am afraid. Dr. Gerald shook his head this morning when he saw her, though he still speaks hopefully to us in regard to her ultimate recovery. She passed a very bad night. Quite delirious. My poor little darling! It wrung my heart to see her suffer so," and the tears sprang to the fond mother's eyes.

Mary pressed her hand gently, in token of the sympathy she felt for her distress.

"I shall send word to mamma," she said, "that I shall not be able to return to-night. Let me share your watching, dear Mrs. Newham; Ellie knows, and is fond of me. I cannot bear to see you losing your strength and health. Do let me stay! I ask it as a great favour."

"You shall then, my dear girl, and thank you very much for your kind offer. Oh! you cannot think what anxiety I am beginning to feel. I keep my fears as much as possible to myself, for I cannot bear to distress poor William, but, I am very much afraid, we shall have to lose our darling, who has made our home so bright and happy, by her lively prattle and endearing ways. May God give us strength to bear this heavy trial, which he has sent us for some wise purpose! Do you know, Miss Graham, as I sat by her bedside last night, I felt sometimes as if I could not bear to lose her, when I pictured the miss, the terrible void it would leave in our hearts, if she were taken from us. William and I

have so loved that child! More even, I think, than dear, little Laurence. And then, a sweet thought seemed to be sent me from heaven to comfort me: 'If she dies, she will be taken away from all sorrow and suffering; she will bloom, a sweet flower in heaven, where you (though now left behind for a short time), will soon rejoin her.' I felt soothed and comforted, and though I still mourned and wept, it was not as one who has no hope. Alas! If our grief is bitter when we have that hope to comfort us, what must theirs be, who have it not?"

Mary's tears fell fast, as she answered. "What, indeed? Their sorrow must be doubly great and overwhelming. But, dear Mrs. Newham, Ellen may be spared, may still live to be a comfort to you."

Her friend shook her head sadly.

"I am afraid it is not God's will," she answered, "but, however, 'while there is life, there is hope,' and, therefore, I will not quite despair. Will you come up to see her?"

"If you do not think it would excite or disturb her."

"Oh no. She lies quite still, and almost unconscious. We rouse her up sometimes to give her her medicine, but I am sorry to say she does not seem to recognise even me."

Mary accordingly accompanied Mrs. Newham upstairs into the sick room. She was shocked by the alteration which had taken place since last she saw her little pupil. The bright blue eyes, which had once been so beautiful in the intelligent quickness of their glance, wandered vacantly round the room, without seeming to notice the objects they rested on; the little wasted hands clutched nervously at the bed-clothes, and a low, moaning sound proceeded from the parched lips. She was indeed changed, and as Mary's eyes rested on the altered face, and she listened to the quick, hurried breathing, she saw too well, that that little form, so cherished and beloved, would soon be cold and lifeless, that the spirit would not linger much longer on

earth, but would soon return to the God who had given it life. The poor, sorrowing mother by her side noticed the change in her countenance.

"Ah!" she murmured in low, heart-broken accents, "I told you so. She will not last much longer. But where is William? I left him here."

She started as a voice answered:

"I am still here, Lucy," and her husband advanced from the other side of the bed. The curtain had hid him from their view, and he had been on his knees in prayer by the side of the dying form of his beloved child. "I have sent for Dr. Gerald," he said, hoarsely, "for I think there is a change for the worse. Hear how she moans! Oh! Ellie, Ellie, my beautiful, my darling, can it be that I am to lose you?" and the unhappy father groaned in the bitterness of his anguish. Mary, deeply moved, and thinking her presence was, perhaps, an intrusion on their grief, was quietly leaving the room, but Mr. Newham stopped her.

"Stay, Miss Graham," he said, mournfully, "and see the last of your little pupil. You are as one of us. She loved you, poor darling," and his voice faltered.

And so they remained together in sorrowful silence, watching the last, ebbing spark of life, and listening to the gasping, quivering breath of the poor little sufferer.

A low tap at the door roused the sorrow-stricken parents from their fixed contemplation of their child. Mr. Newham hastened to the door, and admitted Dr. Gerald.

"Ah! I was afraid," he began, glancing anxiously towards the bed.

"She has changed sadly since last you were here," said Mr. Newham.

"She has, indeed," answered Dr. Gerald, gravely, and taking one of the hands which lay on the coverlid in his, he felt the pulse for a moment, then gently dropped the hand again with a sigh, and gazed sorrowfully at the little convulsed face.

"There is still hope, doctor, there is surely

some hope left!" said the poor father, watching Dr. Gerald's countenance with as much anxiety as the criminal who stands before his judge at the bar of justice, awaiting his final doom.

The kind-hearted doctor drew out his pocket-handkerchief, and passed it nervously to and fro in his hand. "I do, indeed feel for you, Mr. Newham, with all my heart. I can imagine what the feelings of a father must be on losing such a sweet child as this. There is now no chance of her recovery, she cannot last many hours. Poor little thing, poor little child!" he said compassionately, as the low moaning began again, and the features worked convulsively.

Mr. Newham, after hearing the doctor's opinion, took his seat again by the bedside, and never once raised his eyes from the little face, on which the cold dews of death were now fast gathering.

The poor mother turned so deadly pale, that Mary feared she would faint, and gently drew

her arm within hers for support. Mrs. Newham pressed her hand convulsively, and then the long pent-up tears burst forth as she whispered:

"You will never have my little Ellie to teach again, Miss Graham."

"No," answered Mary, solemnly; "she will soon be wiser and greater than the noblest of this earth."

"Mamma," said a little voice proceeding from the bedside. They both hastily turned.

The vacant look was gone from the sweet eyes, but they were fixed with fearful intensity on her mother.

"Help me, mamma," she gasped, spreading out her little arms appealingly towards her.

"Oh! that I could help thee, my child," she exclaimed, advancing towards her darling. One moment the mother and child were locked in a last fond embrace, and then raising her little face from her mother's bosom, Ellie looked up with a sweet, happy smile.

"No help now, dear mamma," she said, "the pain is gone. I am going too, up there" (lifting her little finger towards heaven), "far away, where, Miss Graham says, the angels live. Good bye, dear papa and mamma—don't cry for Ellie!"

The large blue eyes dwelt lovingly on their faces for a moment, wandered to Mary, who stood weeping at the foot of the bed, and then sinking back, she gave one gasping sigh, and they closed for ever in this world. Gone was that happy spirit to join the host of cherubim and seraphim in their praises of Him who had redeemed them. But alas! for those left behind to mourn their loss—for the father who now calls in vain for his Ellie, the cherished darling of his heart, to return, for the mother, who sees the daughter she had fondly hoped would live to watch beside her bed of death, and comfort her in sickness and trouble, now lying cold and inanimate before her.

Sweet little Ellie, now an angel of light above, brief was thy stay on earth; short and

innocent thy happy life here below, yet do we bless God who created thee to be a glorified spirit above, where thy now sorrowing parents will one day hail thee with joy, and together ye will join your voices to those of the angelic throng above!

So thought Mary as she gazed on the lifeless clay. That happy child was safe: sin and suffering could not come nigh her; she was where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Blessed thought! "O!" murmured she softly to the weeping mother beside her, "Were we but all safe where she is now—happy and at rest!"

"Would that we were indeed!" answered Mrs. Newham fervently. "O! my Ellie, be thy parents' guardian spirit, be ever near us, my child, to whisper warning when we go astray! Let not this be a parting for ever, Lord, but so guide our footsteps aright, that we may indeed rejoin her in heaven!" and sinking on her knees by the bedside, the bereaved mother prayed long and earnestly.

When she rose, Mary was surprised at the sobered, peaceful look of resignation in her face. Going up to her husband, and pressing a tender kiss on his gloomy brow, she said gently:

"Come, William, love, come away, our darling is no longer here, and it only makes you miserable to look at her just now. Come with us."

Mr. Newham gave one long, lingering look at the little pale face, surrounded with its golden curls as by a halo of glory, then stooping and imprinting a passionate kiss on the white lips, once so smiling and rosy, he turned hastily away and quitted the room with his wife and Mary. The latter was glad to see that the icy frigidity of despair had at last melted. Since he had kissed his child, the tears fell fast and silently. She knew what a blessed relief those tears would be to the pent up agony of the father's heart. She did all in her power through the rest of that trying day to comfort the bereaved parents with

soothing words of consolation and sympathy, and she was well rewarded at last by Mrs. Newham's warm embrace, and murmured thanks on her leaving to return home.

"Shall I be able to do anything to aid you to-morrow afternoon?" she asked. "Are there any letters I could write, and save you the pain and trouble of doing so?"

"There are several, my love, that must be written, but you have been so kind already, I cannot bear—"

"You do not know how willingly I would do anything for you," said Mary warmly, the tears springing to her eyes as she thought how often she had entered that house with a heavy heart, and been cheered and comforted by its kind mistress.

"Then, my dear, I shall be only too glad to see you again to-morrow."

Accordingly, on the following day, Mary went at the usual hour, and wrote several letters informing different relations and friends of the news—of little Ellie's death. She was

just rising to return to Mrs. Newham, having completed her sad task, when a servant entered bearing a slip of paper.

"My mistress bade me give you this, Miss Graham," she said, handing it to Mary. It contained but a few words.

"I forgot in my hurry, that, Arthur Mainwaring, who was our poor Ellie's godfather, ought to be told. Will you kindly write a few lines to him? Say, I will write myself soon, more at length, I send you the address."

Mary sat down again, and took up her pen to write the required letter, but somehow found the writing of this one to be more difficult than all the rest. What could it be—she asked herself—made her so hesitate, as to what she should say in her letter to this unknown Arthur? The portrait, the remembrance of which, had almost faded from her memory, now rose again vividly before her mind's eye. Those beautiful dark eyes, which she had so admired, would rest on the paper she now held in her hand, would read the words her

fingers penned, doubtless with sorrow at the bereavement of his friends. She was so absorbed in her musings, that she did not notice how her hand had traced, as it were, mechanically, the name of Arthur continually on the sheet of paper before her.

"This will never do!" she said, rousing herself. "I must write and at once."

She began:—

"SIR,—I write on the part of your friend, Mrs. Newham, to acquaint you with the sad news of the death of my little pupil, Ellen. She died yesterday afternoon, from low fever. Though unconscious for some hours before her death, she recovered her senses just at last, and knew, and spoke to her parents. They are (as you may imagine), in great affliction at their loss, for she was a dear, sweet little child, beloved by all who knew her. But their sorrow, though great, is not without hope, for they know they will meet her again, never more to be parted. Mrs. Newham

hopes to be able to write to you herself in a day or two, but, at present, we think it best for her to remain as quiet as possible.

"I am, sir,

"Yours truly,

"MARY GRAHAM."

"Will that do?" she said to herself, reading and re-reading the little note. "I am not satisfied with it, and yet, I do not know what to write—a perfect stranger. There, it must do. Why should I be so very particular about a person I shall most likely never see?"

She folded the letter, and laid it with the rest.

"I am so grateful to you, dear, for relieving me of what would have been so painful a task," said Mrs. Newham, as Mary re-entered the drawing-room. "William was saying this morning, that he should never forget your kindness in our trouble; indeed he quite loves you for the sake of our dear little Ellie, who was always so fond of you."

"I am so glad now, that I was never unnecessarily harsh with her," said Mary. "Little darling! she would come and put up her face to me to be kissed when she had done wrong, and say, 'Forgive Ellie, Miss Graham, she won't be naughty any more.'"

"Dear little pet!" said Mrs. Newham, with a sigh. She continued after a short pause, "You will still teach Laurence of course, dear, as you used to do?"

"I shall be very pleased to do so, but we must enter into different arrangements now."

"How do you mean, Mary? I may call you by your own sweet name, may I not? It seems so much less formal. You do not think I shall make any alteration as to payment surely. You will give the two hours daily as usual, and of course, there will be no difference."

"You are too kind," murmured Mary gratefully.

It was indeed a great relief to her to know that her little earnings would not be lessened.

She inwardly contrasted Mrs. Newham's conduct with that of Mrs. Anderson, who on her missing a morning or two, on account of the terrible weather, and a bad cold, actually deducted the payment for the two days' teaching. Yet, she was quite (indeed, better) able to lose a few shillings than Mrs. Newham, and would heedlessly spend treble that sum on some absurd trifle for her own dress, or amusement; but to her poor governess, who earned her money so hardly, it was quite a different thing. Could they, who act thus meanly and thoughtlessly, know how much difference it makes to those, to whom every little is of consequence, they would surely not grudge what they can so well spare, and unfeelingly take that little away just because their governess is unable to fulfil her duties exactly as usual.

CHAPTER XIV.

Life is before ye, and while now ye stand,
Eager to spring upon the promised land,
Fair smiles the way, where yet your feet have trod,
But few light steps, upon a flowery sod;
And if o'er the bright scene some shadows rise,
Far off they seem, at hand the sunshine lies.

BUTLER.

"WHAT are you doing, my child?"

"Writing to Amy, papa."

The speaker, a young girl, about seventeen, looked up archly at her father's face, as she continued, "Only the second letter this week you know."

"Well, Miss Julia, and don't you think that is rather an alarming amount of correspondence to be kept up weekly with one person?

Let me see," and he laid his hand playfully on two sheets of closely written note paper; "two already covered, and another nearly so; five sheets a week in all. It quite puzzles my old brains to think what you young girls can find to write about to each other!"

"Oh! plenty, papa, I can assure you. Amy has so much to relate and describe about Germany, and I must make some remarks, and take some notice of what she says. Then I have so much, so very much to tell myself! Why I filled that last sheet completely with a description of Ernest Graham alone."

"Really. Take care, Miss Norton. We shall be having some one jealous, if your little head is so filled with handsome curates."

"Oh! papa!" in a tone of deeply wounded feeling.

"Why, you stupid little puss! You know I did not mean what I said. There, give me a kiss, and now as it must still be some hours before your letter can be sent, even if it is finished directly, I want you to lay down your

pen for a minute or two, and just come for a stroll round the garden with me. You can then tell me all about Amy's doings in Germany. She is a very dear, little girl, and I feel a great interest in her."

"Indeed, papa, there is not a girl I know at all equal to Amy. With all her merry, engaging, almost childlike ways, she has such a depth of feeling and thought, quite beyond most girls of her age."

"Ah! she was a dear little pet when last I saw her, quite a beauty, too. Let me see, how old is she now?"

"Just about my age, papa."

"And my Julia's birthday was last month, I remember. Seventeen. What a young lass it is to be sure to be engaged to be married!" and the old gentleman laid his hand caressingly on the soft, light curls of his child's hair, as he added, with some emotion in his voice, "But you will not leave your old parent for some time to come yet, Julia, will you, my child?"

"Dear, dear, papa! You know that it must necessarily be a very long engagement. Never fear. You will be troubled with me for a great many years to come," and the soft blue eyes were turned away to hide the tears, which had arisen at her kind old father's words.

"Well, come along, we won't stay in doors to have our chat such a beautiful day as this," and drawing his young daughter's arm through his, the old gentleman led the way through the open window on to the green lawn without.

"How lovely everything looks this morning!" said Julia Norton, pausing to look around her with admiration and delight. "It puts me in mind of what Amy said in her last letter. She had been describing some beautiful scene in Germany, and she said—I will tell you in her own words—'This world is indeed very, very beautiful, Julia! It is sin alone mars its beauty, and makes it ever appear otherwise.' And then she went on to

say how she wished she could make every one happy. Dear, darling Amy! When she has her fortune entirely at her own disposal, she says she shall do so much good, papa. And I believe it, too. She certainly will have a great deal in her power, will she not? £40,000! It seems to me an immense sum!"

"Well it is a large sum, my child. Heigho! What plans young people do form to be sure!" he continued musingly. "A very sweet girl, that Amy de Vere. Yet I doubt whether all her good resolutions will last a few years hence. In the world, a beauty, an heiress, flattered and caressed, what temptations will beset her path!"

"But, papa, Amy will remain the same, I am sure. She is so very different to other girls."

"Altogether a paragon of perfection, eh, Julia?"

"No, papa, I do not think, indeed I know, Amy is not without faults, who is? Yet there is so much that is loveable and amiable in her

disposition. I only wish I was half as good as she is!"

"Well, my child, your old father is contented with you at all events. He would not exchange his Julia, not even for your sweet little friend, Amy de Vere herself. But we have quite forgotten all that you were going to tell me about the Germans and their doings."

"Ah! yes, and it is so amusing! Amy relates all about them and their customs in such a droll way, it makes me laugh so to read her letters. What do you think, papa, when a lady is engaged to be married, they have cards printed with the names of the betrothed parties in full, send them round to all connections and friends, and then devote a whole day to driving about, paying what they call 'Betrothal visits—Brautbesuche,' to all their friends. She said they had had some couples there lately, and it amused her so! I should not like it if I were the parties, I am sure. Then there is another very odd custom, that I must

tell you of. From the time a girl becomes of a marriageable age the mother begins to hoard up linen, blankets, and all sorts of things in preparation for her marriage trousseau. A German girl takes quite a little fortune to her husband in that way. Then the wardrobes, they themselves always possess, is immense. Amy says she was so astonished when one of the German boarders displayed her perfect treasure of under-clothes. Four or five dozen pairs of stockings, pocket handkerchiefs, &c., &c. But I have just remembered, I have her last letter in my pocket, I will read a few paragraphs of it where she describes the Germans. She goes on to say, 'I should like the people themselves very well, were it not for their shocking irreverence and disregard of the Sabbath. Oh! Julia, I am afraid sometimes I shall forget all my good resolutions, and grow more thoughtless and giddy than before amongst this fearful laxity as regards religion. You know it steals on one unawares when so surrounded by it. What do you

think? The German girls think nothing of finishing any piece of work they may have in hand on the Sunday; indeed often leave the performance of it till then. Is it not dreadful? But worse still—dinner parties are continually given on that day. In passing through the principal streets of Frankfort in the evening, there is evidence of all sorts of gaiety going on within. I have had some invitations out myself, which I have of course, refused. Were it not for this drawback, I should be quite happy, for the English meet with great kindness and attention everywhere.' Is it not a pity, papa?" said Julia, refolding the letter and putting it into her pocket, "is it not a pity that the Germans should be so fearfully regardless of the Sabbath?"

"It is indeed, Julia, and I am afraid it is much the same in all continental towns. For that reason, in spite of the many advantages to be derived in the way of education, I would not send a daughter of mine to any school

abroad. Though all may be as well conducted as possible in the school itself, they cannot prevent their pupils seeing and noticing the irreligion of those surrounding them, and as Amy says in her letter, too often from seeing and hearing things continually that are wrong, though shocked at first, we get accustomed to it after a time, and do not see the evil and the harm of such practices so clearly as before. I believe it requires great resolution, and thoroughly good, fixed principles to be able to pass through such temptations unscathed."

"O! papa, what you say makes me quite sorry that Amy is out there! I daresay too she will stay some years, for she has made up her mind to perfect herself in German."

"Well, my dear, we can only trust that she may not change. Only when I hear you talk so confidently in regard to what she will be and do, I would have you remember that things do not always turn out exactly as we

expect. Amy may keep the same (God grant that she may, dear child!) still, as I have said before, many—very many—temptations will beset her path. She is young and enthusiastic in regard to the future, she forms plans, and makes good resolutions without knowing how hard it will be to fulfil them. Things seem so easy and bright to the hopeful eyes of seventeen. Think not, my Julia, that I would crush down all the sweet blossoms of hope and trust in your young hearts; would have you less enthusiastic for good, less ardent in your bright aspirations upwards. Far from it—I would only have the young a little less confident in their own powers, not quite so sure of success in all their undertakings. There is deceit and hollowness in the world and often bitter (oh! how bitter) disappointment in store for those, who have hitherto thought all so easy, so bright and fair."

Julia's eyes were fixed thoughtfully on the ground, as she answered gravely:

"I think I understand your meaning, papa,

and I wish Amy could have heard all you have said."

"She would very likely think me misanthropical and gloomy in my views, my dear, and turn with renewed pleasure to her own bright castle building. But I think we have had enough serious conversation this morning, Julia. Come into the conservatory, I want you to see some fresh geraniums I have added to our stock."

The father and daughter entered the hothouse, and were soon engaged in an animated discussion of the respective merits and beauties of the newly acquired plants. And there we will leave them, whilst we give the reader further and more important particulars concerning them.

Mr. Norton, Julia's father, had been a large ship-builder, and had obtained at last a sufficient competency to enable him to retire from business, and live in ease and comfort the rest of his days, with his wife and only daughter, for whom he had also made ample provision

in case of his death. His son, Horace, who had chosen the law as his profession, was promising fair to do well, and was already held in some repute, his talents being considerably above the average. It was to a young barrister, a friend of Horace's, that Julia was betrothed. The fond father, on the lover's proposing for his daughter's hand, had, at first, made the very reasonable objection of her extreme youth, but Charles Mildmay had earnestly solicited that they might be allowed to be engaged. "It would be impossible for them to be married for some years to come, he not yet being possessed of a sufficient income, but if Mr. Norton would but permit them to be betrothed, it would make them so much happier." The young man pleaded with true lover-like eloquence, and Mr. Norton yielded at length, giving his consent to his daughter's engagement with one, to whom, though not possessed of great worldly means, he knew he could safely trust her happiness. This was the state of affairs at the present date of our

story. Julia's young friend, Amy de Vêre, was an orphan, and heiress to a fortune of £40,000. Mr. Norton had been constituted one of her guardians, being a dear friend of her deceased parents. The two girls, Julia and Amy, had been friends from childhood, and loved each other with an almost sisterly affection. Amy was at this time, as the reader is aware, in Germany, for the purpose of completing her education. Mr. Norton had purchased a house in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood, and had for some time attended the church where Ernest officiated as curate. The old gentleman had taken a great fancy to Ernest, and an intimacy had soon sprung up between him and Charles Mildmay, Julia's lover. Therefore a great many of what would otherwise have been long, lonely hours in the winter's evenings, were spent pleasantly at Mr. Norton's. It was to them Mary had alluded in one of her letters to Ernest, shortly after his arrival at St. John's Wood.

CHAPTER XV.

Four years had passed away. The following letter from Mary to Ernest, will acquaint the reader with any changes which had taken place since last he heard of them.

"My dearest Brother,

"Though not by your side to give you the accustomed kiss, and wish you in person very many 'happy returns of the day,' I write this to show you that you are not forgotten. Twenty-seven to-day! Four years now since dear papa died. Could we have looked forward, Ernest, and seen that we should continue the same through four long

years without any change for the better, how our hearts would have sunk within us; should we not have been almost tempted to despair. And yet now when I look back it seems almost like a dream. That last evening of your stay at home before leaving us for St. John's Wood, do you remember when I told you of my plan of being a governess? How miserable it all seemed! Oh! how true it is that 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' What we think at first we can never bear, we learn to think of at last with meekness and patience. I go on now in one monotonous routine of daily teaching, scarcely ever indulging in my former bright dreams of the future, for have they not all been rudely (oh! how rudely!) dispelled? That is in regard to myself, though alone. For you and Archie I still weave a sparkling web of gay colours—all bright and fair. Oh! may it please God that my anticipations in regard to your future may indeed be realised; that though dark and cloudy now, the sky may clear for you, my

own dear ones! There is a tone of melancholy despondency in your last letter, which touched me to the heart. Surely, Ernest, you have no secret trouble, no grief that you hide from me—from me, who always tell you every sorrow of my heart. You say you are going on just as usual, and are happy and comfortable, then why? Well, I will not fill my letter with curious questionings. I know you would tell me if there were any very serious cause of disquiet. And after all I ought not to be surprised at your being rather down-hearted just now. Disappointed of the curacy, you were so in hopes of. You are but twenty-seven, though yet, dear Ernest, and I hope in another year or two things will be different. You beg of me to tell you the exact truth in regard to Archie, whether he is getting more reconciled to being usher at Mr. Williams.

"I wish I could say he was, poor boy. He feels it more and more being obliged to relinquish the idea of going into the army. I see

very plainly that it will never do for him to continue where he now is. A mere youth himself, but seventeen, he has the management of boys quite as old, who he says annoy and vex him in every possible way. Such a pity too that that fellow, Dick Marsden, should be still there; he was always Archie's enemy. How different it would all have been if that dear kind Mr. Fanshawe had lived! Mr. Williams is so strange and stern a man, I am afraid Archie will never be happy with him, he wants to be with some one to whom he can go for advice and sympathy in his troubles with the boys. However, I have made up my my mind to see about some other school; so that he may be able to leave next quarter. I write him long, encouraging letters, begging him to bear up bravely, and trust in God who, when he sees fit, can alter all things for the better.

"We have not heard from him lately, but I am in hopes he is going on all right, for he generally writes quite openly and freely, tel-

ling me all his troubles. I do hope and pray, Ernest, that he may soon be happier. It seems so hard, does it not, he the youngest and the darling? But I ought not to write in a gloomy style to-day. Do you know I feel a great longing to see you, dear Ernest, to kiss all the gloomy clouds away, make you smile in spite of yourself, and look forward more hopefully into the future. Oh! remember, my loved brother!

"Though dark our fate and sad our lot,
Let us be still, and murmur not;
But breathe the prayer our Saviour taught,
Thy will be done, thy will be done!"

"Your ever loving sister,

"MARY GRAHAM."

Letter from Ernest to Mary.

"MY DEAREST SISTER—

"Many thanks for your kind loving letter of to-day. You do well to chide me for my selfish repining at disappointment and trouble. But oh! my sister, bear with me; I

have sometimes my hours of gloom and sadness, when I long with an aching heart for things unattainable, at least for me—I know, I feel how wrong and sinful it is thus to give way to such rebellious murmuring. Oh! pray for me, Mary, that I, who preach to others, may not myself fail in my duty, in patience and fortitude under disappointment and trials. I had so hoped to have been able to have done something for Archie, to enable him at least to be something better than a poor usher, but it has pleased God that my hopes should fail, that it should be otherwise to what I had thought.

"We will however, as you say, trust that he may be more comfortable in another school. I shall see if I cannot hear of something to suit him. Give him my best love, and tell him we all have our different crosses and troubles, and to each one their own seems hardest to bear. You say you wish very much to see me, my dear sister. I too have had quite a longing after home lately, and intend,

if possible, to come and spend this day week with you. I shall therefore reserve all news till we meet, as I am now rather pressed for time.

"Ever your sincerely attached brother,

"ERNEST GRAHAM."

"Oh! mamma!" exclaimed Mary, joyfully on reading the contents of her letter; "Ernest is coming next week. There's good news for you," and gaily tossing the letter containing the welcome intelligence to Mrs. Graham, she commenced singing merrily.

"Mary dear, that singing of yours goes through my poor head; pray leave off. Ernest coming. Well, I am very glad, but how has he managed to get a holiday?" And picking up the letter, Mrs. Graham proceeded to decipher its contents. She was little changed since last we saw her. Though expecting each winter would be her last, Mrs. Graham still lived on, greatly it seemed to her own astonishment, for she was continually preparing her children's minds for the impending

sad event of her death. Mary, too, is but little altered. Perhaps there is even a deeper shadow of pensive thought on her fair brow than heretofore, yet it rather increases the beauty of her face than otherwise. She ceased singing at her mother's request, but rather an arch smile played round the corners of her mouth as she quitted the apartment, and on reaching her own room, she recommenced with renewed gaiety, and this time completed the verse without interruption.

"Ernest coming!" she murmured to herself; "something to look forward to, indeed. Oh! how I wish Monday was here!"

Could she have known the sorrow those intervening days would bring her, or foreseen the anguish of that so longed for meeting, how different would have been her thoughts! But, happily for her, she knows it not, and sits by the window in the twilight of that sweet June evening, singing gaily, and thinking with delight of her beloved brother's promised visit.

"Miss Mary," said the voice of old Martha suddenly by her side.

"Oh! Martha, how you startled me!"

"I knocked twice, Miss, but you were singing, and did not hear me, so then I made bold and came in, knowing you would pardon me for the sake of the news I brought. Mr. Archie is here, Miss."

"Archie! How—what?" exclaimed Mary in great surprise; then springing by the old servant, she hastily descended the stairs.

We scarcely recognize Archie in the tall, handsome youth who hastened forward to greet her.

"Don't be frightened, Mary," he said, reassuringly, though with rather a forced gaiety in his tone and manner. "I have got to-morrow for a holiday, and am come to spend it with you. Why should you all be so surprised?" he continued, with a somewhat nervous agitation in his look and voice.

"Why, dear, it is so unexpected a pleasure that really, for the moment, I could scarcely

believe Martin when she said you
You did not write, you see, to let
you were coming."

"I had no time—I did not know
morning," and he passed back the
of his hair with an impatient
trying to conceal the
and manner.

"Well, of course you know, dear
we are delighted to see you,"
smiling. "And now for
going on a little more
"Pretty much as
gloomily. "Don't ask me anything
Mary; it only makes me
does no good. I hope to
that's all."

"I hope so too, Herbie. We
out for some other
be more
He made no
whether they had
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"Why, dear, it is so unexpected a pleasure that really, for the moment, I could scarcely

believe Martha when she said you were here. You did not write, you see, to let us know you were coming."

"I had no time; I did not know myself this morning," and he tossed back the dark curls of his hair with an impatient movement, as if trying to conceal the perturbation in his voice and manner.

"Well, of course you know, dear Archie, we are delighted to see you," said Mary, smiling. "And now for the news. Are you going on a little more comfortably?"

"Pretty much as usual," he answered gloomily. "Don't ask me anything about it, Mary; it only makes us all unhappy, and does no good. I hope to be well out of it soon, that's all."

"I hope so too, Archie. We are looking out for some other school, where you would be more comfortable."

He made no remark, but asked abruptly whether they had heard lately from Ernest.

"This evening, just before you arrived. He

is coming to spend next Tuesday with us. What a pity you did not get your holiday on the same day," said Mrs. Graham regretfully.

"Yes, it is," said Archie musingly. "Dear Ernest! Give him my best love, Mary, when you write."

He spoke in a voice of suppressed emotion.

"I will, dear; that is his letter on the table, and there is a message in it for you."

Archie lifted the letter from the table, but his hand trembled to that degree that the paper quivered and shook in his grasp.

"You read it, Mary," he said, passing it hastily to his sister; "I have not got over my hurried walk from the station yet," he added with a forced laugh, in answer to his sister's startled look of enquiry.

"Are you quite well, Archie?" asked Mrs. Graham anxiously. "Your hand struck me as being feverish when you came in, and your face is very much flushed; you should not over-exert yourself so. You will repent it

some day. People never know the value of health till they lose it, as I have done."

"I am quite well, mother, indeed," said Archie, moving restlessly in his chair. "Read Ernest's letter to me, will you, Mary?"

He turned his face towards the window, and his features worked convulsively as Mary read the part in which Ernest alluded to him. He turned, however, as she concluded—

"How good Ernest is! It is not every one that can speak and feel as he does," he said, with a deep sigh.

"No, dear, it is not indeed; but we ought all to try," and Mary leant over the back of his chair, and pressed an affectionate kiss on her young brother's brow, as she added, "you will be more cheerful soon, dear Archie, away from that horrid school."

He did not answer, but rose and went to the window, making some casual remark about the garden. Mary watched his gloomy countenance with tender anxiety.

"Will you come into the garden for a little while, Archie?" she said, advancing towards him, "it is such a lovely evening, and we can all sit out there and talk in the little arbour."

He seemed pleased at the proposition, and they accordingly stepped out on to the smooth little lawn in front of the house. Oh! how often in after years did Mary's thoughts go back to that sweet summer's evening, which they had passed together, when, all unconscious and unthinking, they had listened to that voice, and gazed on that face which they were not to see again for many a long year, and then under what different circumstances. Had they known, how would they have treasured every word, every look, with jealous affection; how dwelt with lingering tenderness on that last goodbye as they parted for the night.

Mary was struck by the convulsive pressure of his lips as he said, "good night, dear Mary," and the earnest look with which he turned to gaze once more at her face, as if

wishing to imprint its loved features more impressively on his memory. Yet no suspicion of anything wrong entered her mind; she only thought with redoubled pride of the deep affection which he felt for them all.

And as he turned once again to his mother, murmuring in broken accents, "Bless me, my mother," the tears rose to her eyes as she thought—"Oh! how unchanged in heart and affection from the warm-hearted boy, who used to kneel at his mother's knee, and clasping his little chubby arms round her neck, beg for one more kiss before retiring to rest." Little did she dream, that the blessing so earnestly implored was to last him through long years of separation and misery.

Oh! Archie, Archie! could you know the deep anguish, the sorrow you are preparing for yourself and those who love you so fondly, would you not pause ere taking the final decisive step? Alas! he thinks, unhappy boy, that the decisive step is taken, that it is now too late to retract, as throwing himself on

his little bed he groans in the deep agony of his spirit, and draws from his pocket a little knot of colored ribbons, on which he gazes with mournful intensity. Yet even then, though well nigh broken-hearted at parting with his beloved ones; even then, whilst he pictures with sorrow their anguish on learning the truth, he thinks with pride of the bright future, which (poor infatuated boy), he still trusts is in store for him.

Shall he not return to them some day loaded with honors, and make up to them for all that they now suffer on his account. He knows best about his own affairs, he can no longer bear the miserable drudgery of being an usher, with no chance of being anything better. And what chance is there now for him? A private soldier, one on whom society gazes with contempt, and considered by those who are in reality, perhaps by birth and education beneath him, yet, whom wealth and influence have made his superiors in position, as little better than a dog, to be looked upon in the

same light as the lowest menial in their household.

He dreams of honor and promotion, of a name to be won by courage and noble deeds, and little thinks what long years of slavery and humiliation must pass, before even one step will be taken upon that ladder, to the highest pinnacle of which he now thinks he shall mount so easily, and so soon. Alas! for the vain imaginings of thoughtless, impetuous youth. How bitter is the awakening from the bright dreams of happiness, to the hard stern realities of life!

While Archie sits musing, almost forgetting the agony of separation from his fond mother and sister, in anticipations of future glory and fame, Mary is on her knees praying earnestly, for his welfare and happiness. Those prayers were heard and answered, though in a far different way to what she now hopes and anticipates.

The fiery ordeal of sorrow and suffering

must be gone through; her too fondly cherished idol laid low in the dust; chastened and purified in the furnace of affliction, he must learn patience and humility under God's chastisement.

END OF VOL. I.

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